A New Companion to Hispanic Mysticism

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A New Companion to Hispanic Mysticism

Edited by

Hilaire Kallendorf



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For my son Barrett, ensconced on my lap for most of this book's editing process. Nursing him was a truly spiritual experience which taught me the mystical art of "being still".

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PROLOGUE

It is both a privilege and a pleasure to have been asked to write a prologue to *A New Companion to Hispanic Mysticism*. When I began my own doctoral research some 40 years ago, the study of Spanish mysticism of the Golden Age was well established in its own small corner of the English-speaking academic world, not least thanks to the pioneering work of E. Allison Peers. But there was scarcely any interaction between its literary scholars on the one hand and its historians, philosophers and theologians on the other; with few exceptions, they worked within their own disciplinary boundaries. No one then could have known how the subject was going to develop, nor have predicted the trajectory it would follow, as the *New Companion* now maps it out.

Perhaps that is as it should be: mystics habitually confound expectations and resist the tidy explanations some might wish to impose on them, as this volume so persuasively shows concerning the mystics of the early modern Hispanic worlds, Old and New. Just as any attempt to privilege one term of the central doctrinal paradoxes of orthodox Christianity over another will fail to respect the creative tension which inheres in holding them together, so critical approaches to mysticism which try to fit it into predetermined categories or explain it by reductive theories may have a glib persuasiveness but are unlikely to do it justice. Wherever one looks among the mystics, paradox and contradiction appear. But they are not a mark of weak-mindedness; they are the outward sign of an inherent inward complexity.

For the literary critic, the pre-eminent of these signs attaches to the phenomenon of language itself. Mystics may claim that words are insufficient to communicate their experience, but that does not force them into silence. They may borrow a language which comes to them hallowed by the traditions which have nourished them, but they often use it in striking and original ways. If they are indebted to existing traditions, they also create new ones. Why should mystical experience not give rise to such creativity in the literary sphere? The mystics face a constant struggle to understand what we might term the demands of the unconscious self; to confront all that appears to harm and to diminish the human spirit; to become transparent to a power they tell

us is beyond their own, which enlarges that spirit and fulfills its deepest cravings. The language they craft reflects that struggle, as they seek to find a voice which may articulate their experience. It may sometimes be dry and analytical, akin to a philosophical or spiritual treatise. More usually it is autobiographical and confessional, especially for those women who in one way or another wrote under obedience. But at its finest it soars. Symbols of darkness and light, fire and flame, wounding and healing, death and life, familiar to students of this period in the context of Petrarchan love poetry, are pressed into different service and work in more original ways. Simile and metaphor, often vivid and memorable, compel the reader's attention. The language and poetry of the Bible and the liturgy is never far away. Mystics are quite eclectic in their choice of styles and genres. Though they inherit the language and imagery of the past, at their best they renew it and are themselves incorporated into the tradition for generations to come, marking it with their own particular witness. To be steeped in a living tradition does not appear to constrain them or make them conform to a fixed model; it inspires them to new forms of expression. To be engaged in the work of personal renewal and, for some, in a reform of religious institutions (which takes them back to the origins of their own founding tradition) seems to release fresh energies and to produce new visions and expressions of its significance.

At the heart of mystical experience is the journey of the soul to union with the divine. Even when it involves what we would think of as negative experiences, mysticism embraces them chiefly not as an end in themselves but as a means towards bringing about the positive fruits of growth. The journey itself must begin with ascetic and penitential practices, to break the soul's dependence on the creaturely and re-order its priorities; but it leads to altered states of being, seeing and understanding—some of which, at least (as in Saint John of the Cross's poetry and in the fourth book of his *Living Flame of Love*), celebrate the beauty and diversity of the created world. The dynamic symbol of the journey implies progress toward a desired goal, but there are always serious obstacles to be faced on the way, as well as the dangers of making fundamental errors of direction, as the Protestant John Bunyan so memorably showed in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The itinerary is never a straightforward one, nor is there a single route, clearly mapped out for every pilgrim to follow. Mysticism respects different temperaments. Different traditions privilege different emphases; so,

too, may different individuals co-exist within the same tradition, as the cases of the Spanish Carmelite mystics Saint Teresa of Jesus and Saint John of the Cross so eloquently show.

Paradoxes of power and powerlessness abound. Mysticism has almost always been marginal to more institutional forms of religion, even if its practitioners and exponents have formed part of them, as members of religious communities must. It has often incurred the suspicion of ecclesiastical authorities and it may, directly or indirectly, offer a serious critique of the religious life as more conventionally led. Yet it must also be accounted central, in the sense that it claims to have unmediated access to the divine and living experience of the source of true religion. Within its marginality, as this *Companion* so clearly reveals, women find a voice which is largely denied them elsewhere in society. The literature of mysticism may be culturally conditioned, yet just as often it is counter-cultural. Mystics may likewise sing the praises of passive contemplation, yet they do not remain rapt in their cells: some of them have been extraordinarily active, not least Saint Teresa, whose influence rapidly reached far beyond the strict enclosure which she considered essential for the life of prayer.

In revisiting the Iberian mystics of the early modern period, this *Companion* is necessarily interdisciplinary. Mysticism raises questions which are of proper interest not only to literary critics and theologians, but to historians of ideas and of culture, philosophers, psychologists and anthropologists, as these essays amply demonstrate. It relates to both the natural world and the built environment, as well as to the other arts. What the reader will discover in these pages is an early modern world far removed from our modern tendency to regard the past as on the one hand irredeemably naive and superstitious and on the other fixed in dogmatic and hierarchical certainties. The editor writes in her introduction of the 'messiness' of the period. One only has to read the Spanish physician Huarte de San Juan (*c.*1530–92) on the subject of miracles and rationality to discover a mind which would seem more at home in the Enlightenment, or hear Alonso López Pinciano's *alter ego* in his *Ancient Poetic Philosophy* of 1596 tell us that he has never been given to ascribing supernatural causes to phenomena for which there are perfectly good natural explanations, to realize that the attempt to fit all Spaniards of the period into neat bundles which the post-modern mind can deconstruct is doomed. Saint John of the Cross himself was extremely skeptical about the value of almost all

visions and revelations, regarding them as a distraction which could endanger the whole enterprise.

This book, then, sets a new agenda for the study of the Spanish and Portuguese mystics, in the Old World and the New. Its essays and their accompanying footnotes will prove a rich resource for further investigation. But there is another paradox I could not help but notice as I read the pages which follow. As Saint Teresa's first editor, Fray Luis de León, put it in his dedicatory letter to Ana de Jesús, herself the dedicatee of Saint John of the Cross's commentary on his *Spiritual Canticle*: 'I neither knew nor saw Mother Teresa of Jesus while she was on earth; but now that she lives in heaven, I know and see her almost continually in two living images she left of herself, her daughters and her books'. Her daughters, of course, were—and are—the sisters of the Carmelite Reform she initiated. It is worth remembering that the example and writings of Saint Teresa and Saint John of the Cross, as of other writers covered here, are not only the preserve of scholars: they continue to guide and to inspire the lives of individuals and of small communities of men and of women. Uniquely, perhaps, in the study of the Hispanic world of the Golden Age, the literature associated with mysticism has passed into the modern world not only as a body of texts but also as lived example. The final paradox, then, is this: that as we read, we too are being read. Our comfortable assumptions and ready explanations are being questioned; some of our own fragmented culture's forgotten insights into what it means to be human and how we might live more fruitfully are being held out for our consideration. The language and the concepts may be unfamiliar to us, yet that very unfamiliarity is their strength, because it forces us to stop and think, whereas the familiar will rarely jolt us out of our sleep. As modern readers, we cannot take everything the mystics say at face value, and we may be skeptical about much of it, coming at it as we do through our own cultural conditioning, post-Freudian, rational and scientific. But their insistence on a proper degree of humility about oneself and its correlative, respect for the other, has lost none of its power to disturb our ease, in times which are every bit as troubled as those in which they lived, struggled, and searched.

Colin Thompson
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INTRODUCTION: EXPANDING THE MYSTICAL CANON

Hilaire Kallendorf

I was sitting at a café in Princeton two summers ago, chatting with a scholarly friend about an invitation I had received recently from the senior acquisitions editor at Brill. He wanted me to edit *A New Companion to Spanish Mysticism*, which would of course focus on the early modern period when Spanish mysticism had reached its zenith.

The editor explained how he had long felt that such a volume, published in English, would be welcome. While instinctively I agreed, I immediately started trying to establish the proposed handbook's *raison d'être*. Why was it needed? Who would read it? And most crucially, what would be "new" about it that would have the potential to shape future directions for research in the field of mysticism studies?

Teaching (as I do) in a Department of Hispanic Studies, I quickly realized that the assignment would have to be modified slightly if I was to accept it at all: the title would have to be changed to *A New Companion to Hispanic Mysticism* to reflect the wide geographical range of Spain's empire during its greatest era of world dominance. At the height of its reign, the Spanish monarchy controlled not only the entirety of the Iberian Peninsula (including Portugal), but also the Low Countries and southern Italy—in addition to its New World colonies. Surely a representative look at mystical texts and figures during this time period ought to take some of these places into account. While it would be impossible to cover such an immense set of territories, at least it could be feasible to extend the reach of the volume beyond Spain.

But as I talked with my friend, it soon became evident that this was not the only expansion in store for the project. We started tossing around possible topics for commissioned essays. (Perhaps I neglected to mention that my friend is a very well-respected scholar in this field.) Before long, a pattern started to emerge. Every time I would throw out an idea for a topic, my friend would shoot it down with the comment, "No, that's not really mysticism." Various and sundry "mystical" figures evidently became disqualified once they had been discredited by the Inquisition or the Catholic Church more generally

in the course of beatification / canonization proceedings, etc. Finally becoming exasperated, I felt like asking: "who gets to decide?" At that moment I realized that I had just stumbled upon my angle for this essay collection…

Already back in 2003, in the epilogue to my first book *Exorcism and Its Texts*, I had begun to question the relationships among such apparently (at first glance) disparate phenomena as melancholy, ecstasy, epilepsy, and demonic possession. My aim in that first, preliminary incursion into this material was to show that these—to (post)modern sensibilities—rigidly compartmentalized categories were divided by more permeable boundaries during the early modern age:

> Ecstasy and enthusiasm were two other…polyvalent categories which were related to demonic possession…M. A. Screech explains how the term "ecstasy" became an umbrella for many different experiences of the early modern self:
>
> > Not all ecstasies were high, spiritual ones.… Ecstasies of various sorts were a common experience. Drunkenness was a form of ecstasy; so was falling in love; so were sexual climaxes; so was bravery on the field of battle; so was scholarly devotion to selfless inquiries; so was poetic inspiration; so were the revelations which made Socrates, say, and Hippocrates the authorities they are; so too were several kinds of madness, which share some spiritual powers with genius itself. "Ecstasy" covered them all.
>
> While only sometimes distinguished from rapture *per se*, ecstasy was a term often associated with *mystics* and easily confused with demonic possession—a condition which, it was believed, God could also use to purify and refine his saints. As Fernando Cervantes notes, "diabolical possessions were frequently a sign of divine favour and mercy. There were countless ways in which God could make use of a possession in order to 'purge' a favourite soul in preparation for the *mystical union*."[1]

Thus it should come as no surprise that exorcism led me to mysticism. While this may seem like walking in the back door instead of the front, in a very real sense these two phenomena may be viewed as two sides of the same coin. Exorcism seeks to rid a human body of possession by

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[1] Hilaire Kallendorf, *Exorcism and Its Texts: Subjectivity in Early Modern Literature of England and Spain* (Toronto, 2003), p. 203, emphasis added. In this excerpt I cite M. A. Screech, *Montaigne and Melancholy: The Wisdom of the Essays* (Selinsgrove, 1983), p. 10; and Fernando Cervantes, *The Devil in the New World: The Impact of Diabolism in New Spain* (New Haven, 1994), p. 101. For further definitions of ecstasy, see Alison Weber, "Between Ecstasy and Exorcism: Religious Negotiation in Sixteenth-Century Spain," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 23.2 (1993): 221–34; and M. A. Screech, *Ecstasy and the Praise of Folly* (London, 1980).

a malign spirit, while the practitioner of mysticism seeks union with the Holy Spirit. But the tie that unites them is the interpenetration of the human with the divine.

Now, I would like to make the caveat that the majority of these essays are not so polemical as this introduction may sound. I believe one purpose of any handbook or reference work ought to be to introduce graduate students or new scholars in the field to the subject matter. The essays printed here do that: any volume on Hispanic mysticism in the early modern era would be incomplete, for example, without articles on such towering figures as Saint Teresa of Ávila and Saint John of the Cross. Several masterful surveys, likewise—such as José Adriano de Freitas Carvalho's sweeping panorama of the Portuguese mystical landscape and Fernando Durán López's encyclopedic treatment of the genre of spiritual autobiography—will give readers ample springboards for launching their own research agendas.

In deciding which of the many brilliant scholars in this field to approach, I felt that the goal was twofold. In order for this volume to really live up to its potential, I would need to take seriously several of the words in its title. I have already commented upon the distinction between "Spanish" and "Hispanic". In parallel fashion, I realized that this work would need to serve as a "Handbook", but that it would also have to be (at least in some sense) "New". If successful, the result would be nothing short of an expansion of the mystical canon…

* * *

So for the purposes of this volume, at least, what counts as mysticism? Who's in and who's out? Surely I, as a literary scholar with no formal theological training, would not feel qualified to make such a judgment. But as I mulled over these questions, I kept returning to a carefully considered answer I had given to a question raised long ago at my dissertation defense. One of the professors present, willingly seduced by the sensationalism of the exorcism cases I had been describing, asked the obvious question: what really happened? Were these recorded instances of demonic possession real? Were they merely glimpses of "social energies circulating", or perhaps the inevitable product of cynical "self-fashioning"?[2] Knowing this question might come up,

[2] I refer with these phrases to Stephen Greenblatt's New Historicist treatment of religious phenomena in "Shakespeare and the Exorcists," in *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley, 1988), pp. 94–128.

I delivered the answer I had thoughtfully prepared: the ontological moment is no longer with us. It is impossible for us to judge *now* what happened *then*. We will never capture that elusive quotient of *wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*.

But looking back now, I realize that even the bystanders at those (often public) exorcisms probably could not tell what was going on either. Did the participants themselves even really know? It strikes me that this is the perennial dilemma for scholars who study religious phenomena, whether these find expression in theological treatises, literary *novellas*, Baroque *cantatas* or works of plastic art. In approaching this subject matter, I believe we would do well to start from a position of healthy respect for the distance separating us from the great mystics (in terms of spiritual maturity as well as simple lack of geographical proximity, or the most basic distinctions of time and place). This humbly respectful stance has been articulated well in recent years by such scholars of early modern religion as Lorraine Daston, Brad Gregory and Stuart Clark. As Daston reminds us, in the prevalent early modern world view, "the evidence of miracles was more than a spectacular appeal to the senses. Ideally, it was pure evidence, unequivocal in its interpretation, and irresistible in its persuasive power… [B]ecause God was the author of miracles, they proved beyond a shadow of a doubt… Miracles were God's signature."[3] To question what "really happened" whenever a miracle was performed, in an important sense, *misses the point* of the event. Paradoxically, as Jean de Viguerie has pointed out, the miracles that were held up to official scrutiny by the Inquisition and other official apparatuses have ended up being among the best-documented facts of the early modern period.[4] But even if they were not, our modern and postmodern attempts to second-guess or silence early modern voices by refusing to hear them on their own terms seems ahistorical at best.

In defending this stance, these scholars have also expended considerable energy decrying its opposite, whether in the context of miracles or martyrdom. As Gregory notes in his prize-winning *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe*,

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[3] Lorraine Daston, "Marvelous Facts and Miraculous Evidence in Early Modern Europe," *Critical Inquiry* 18.1 (1991): 93–124, at pp. 116, 118.

[4] "Le miracle est un fait scientifiquement prouvé" (Jean de Viguerie, "Le miracle dans la France du XVIIe siècle," *XVIIe siècle* 35 [1983]: 313–31, at p. 330).

> [S]cholars… deploy reductionist theories… When they consider martyrdom at all, they seem uninterested in exploring what it meant to martyrs and their contemporaries. Instead, modern or postmodern beliefs underpin explanatory theories that assume a post-Enlightenment, materialist, and atheistic metaphysic… characterized mostly by an indifference toward religious claims… No social scientific or cultural theory undergirded by a tacit atheism, the historical imagination of which is restricted to people competing for influence, striving for power, resisting the exercise of power, "constructing" themselves, "reinventing" themselves, manipulating symbols, and the like, can explain martyrdom. The act of martyrdom makes no sense whatsoever unless we take religion seriously, on the terms of people who were willing to die for their convictions… What would it even mean to read the sources "against the grain"? That Christians did not really believe what they died for?[5]

Here we see that a responsible approach to early modern mysticism, like to early modern martyrdom, presupposes a respect for the faith of its practitioners.

In his monumental *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*—although focusing on the darker side of early modern religious experience—Stuart Clark comes to similar conclusions about historiographical method:

> A striking example [of irresponsible scholarly assumptions] is D. P. Walker's argument that what we ought to be doing in cases of possession from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is discovering what actually happened. For him this excludes the possibility that demoniacs were actually possessed. The undoubted fact that this is not an explanation likely to appeal to a modern audience is his reason for siding with the other two available in the period itself. "Historians," he urges, "should not ask their readers to accept supernatural phenomena." The realism implicit in this recommendation is, no doubt, still seductive. It reassures the observer of exotic behaviour in the past that it can be described in ways that satisfy his or her own expectations of what can and cannot happen. Its limitations are none the less fundamental. The view that we cannot understand the actions and beliefs of others without accepting them as true and valid ourselves preempts the history of cultures with models of reality different from ours. It cannot even begin to account for the activity of the anthropologist. In the case of possession (and much else concerning demonism and witchcraft) our task cannot, therefore, be to trace the relationship between what was said about it and what it "actually" amounted to—as if the two can be successfully matched up or

[5] Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999), p. 350.

> shown to be at odds. At the very least we are obliged to take up a relativist position with regard to what could count as real.[6]

The same might be said of certain sensational aspects of mysticism. The bodily symptoms, the trances, the stigmata—all could be faked by a clever enough pretender; and this is in fact what happened (as was demonstrated at length by the Inquisition's contemporaneous inquiry) in the case, described ingeniously in this volume by Freddy Domínguez, of La Monja de Lisboa. But if we were to use her subsequent repudiation as a worthy criterion to exclude her, would we not be allowing the Holy Office (which has itself been villified in recent studies)[7] still to cast its nefarious shadow? How do we know for sure that the recorded experiences of other mystics were any different? Do we, ironically, have more surviving documentation on the charlatans who got caught?

In the course of pondering these often unanswerable questions, I came to see that it is the very messiness of the early modern period which fascinates me. This was a time when these distinctions were being interrogated, when many of these boundaries were becoming blurred. And I think what postmodernity has taught us—as it has sounded the death-knell of grand narratives—is that messiness and fragmentation are OK, particularly when we are confronted with phenomena we find impossible to categorize. Maybe that's not really our job…

Editing this volume has been a spiritual experience for me, but perhaps not in all the ways you might expect. I came to see myself, in the great early modern humanist tradition, as almost a ventriloquist: a necromancer, of sorts.[8] I came to see my role as that of a facilitator for letting the dead mystics speak. I made the editorial decision to include, rather than exclude, certain marginal or "fringe" figures, but not because I see myself as having the last word on their suitability for

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[6] Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, 1997), p. 396. Clark cites D. P. Walker, *Unclean Spirits: Possession and Exorcism in France and England in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries* (Philadelphia, 1981), p. 15.

[7] For one of many studies perpetuating the so-called Black Legend of the Inquisition, see B. Netanyahu, *The Origins of the Inquisition in Fifteenth Century Spain* (New York, 1995). For a revisionist approach which in some ways amounts to a defense of the Inquisition, see Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision* (London, 1997).

[8] On the connections made in the early modern period between humanism and necromancy, see Anthony Grafton, *Bring Out Your Dead: The Past as Revelation* (Cambridge, Mass., 2001).

the mystical canon. Rather—in what is perhaps a tacit participation in the general trend within cultural studies to make of the margins a new center—their presence here is an acknowledgment that we are not qualified to decide.

It would be the height of arrogance to presume to bring these historical figures to trial now, after so many years. Even if we could do so, what would we ask them? What would they say? In their defense, it could be stated simply that they participated in cultural trends which (both now and at the time when they lived) have been associated with a religious practice known as mysticism.

* * *

Many of the essays contained in this volume themselves include theoretical reflections and / or metacommentary on these very questions. In "Traditions, Life Experiences and Orientations in Portuguese Mysticism (1515–1630)", José Adriano de Freitas Carvalho offers the following working definition of mysticism, which he derives from a 16th-century treatise, *Mística teologia*, by Sebastião Toscano:

> In the considerations that follow, "mysticism" is understood as the personal "theology" of "contemplative and devout people, given to prayer and contemplation", which "consists more of feeling God within the soul by means of an enlightened, sweet, gentle and loving knowledge, than of knowing how to teach this knowledge by means of words"…[9] This understanding will consequently lead us from the observation of the life experiences of some of the more outstanding individuals or groups, to the indoctrination in some works which, directly or indirectly, aimed to act as a guide in the search of this *modus* of "knowledge" as an "experience" of the love of God.[10]

Here we see that Carvalho, following Toscano, views mysticism as some combination of personal theology, life experiences or indoctrination, as well as a distinctive "mode of knowledge". This seems to me a broad enough definition to use as a starting point for our discussion. In her essay on Saint Ignatius, Darcy Donahue privileges originality over tradition, individual experience over communal heritage, in her

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[9] "gente recolhida e devota, dada à oração e contemplação"; "consiste mais em sentir de Deos dentro da alma por hum alumeado conhecimento doce, suave, e amoroso, que em sabêla ensinar por palavras" (Sebastião Toscano, *Mística teologia* [Lisbon, 1568], pp. 28v–29r).

[10] José Adriano de Freitas Carvalho, "Traditions, Life Experiences and Orientations in Portuguese Mysticism (1515–1630)," p. 39 of the present volume.

definition of mysticism: "[i]t is precisely the awareness that something completely new and transformative is occurring that characterizes the mysticism of infused contemplation, attainable only through God's special activity upon the chosen individual."[11] However, she tempers this judgment with the assertion that "[i]t is important to understand the ways in which these two categories of experience (the individual and the collective) interact".[12]

One crux of interaction between these two categories obviously centered around authority. As Freddy Domínguez reminds us, "[a] common theme in studies about female spirituality and mysticism in the early modern world revolves around the notion of authority. As one scholar has summed it up, mysticism 'provided an alternative source of authority for religious women,' often allowing them to 'circumvent the controlling authority of male clerics.'"[13] This idea is affirmed in a nuanced way by Fernando Durán in his essay on feminine conventual autobiography written from obedience to a confessor or other authority figure.

But while these may be important aspects or characteristic features of early modern mysticism, they hardly contribute in any meaningful way to its definition. Surely mysticism was more than an "alternative source of authority"! Faced with the same definitional questions, Glyn Redworth takes a stance which is imbued with contemporary literary theory, exposing "the inadequacies and simplifications involved in delimiting her [Luisa de Carvajal]—or anyone?—as a mystic."[14] He notes that for French theoretician Michel de Certeau, mysticism was "a manner of speaking", a "way of talking about religion without recourse to the antiseptic language of theology." But, Redworth insists—and here he employs the discourse of performance studies—"a mystic is also someone who knowingly performs as such. It has to be a self-conscious act." He repeats that "a mystic must want to be seen as such".[15]

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[11] Darcy Donahue, "The Mysticism of Saint Ignatius Loyola," p. 213 of the present volume.

[12] Darcy Donahue, "The Mysticism of Saint Ignatius Loyola," p. 201.

[13] Freddy Domínguez, "From Saint to Sinner: Sixteenth-Century Perceptions of 'La Monja de Lisboa,'" p. 319 of the present volume. He cites R. Po-Chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 142.

[14] Glyn Redworth, "A New Way of Living? Luisa de Carvajal and the Limits of Mysticism," pp. 287–88 of the present volume.

[15] Glyn Redworth, "A New Way of Living?", pp. 288, 294.

So what is mysticism? A personal theology? Ecstatic visions? Doctrine or teaching dealing with the same? Perhaps it is more appropriately termed a "mode of knowledge" or "manner of speaking", à la Certeau. Or then again, it might be "infused contemplation, attainable only through God's special activity". Another contributor to this handbook, Christina Lee, even alludes to Steven Ozment's assertion that "mysticism is a form of spirituality that has historically appealed to those who desire a personal relation with God—or in this case, His mother—independent from the mediation of oppressive regimes."[16]

This volume argues that mysticism is all this and more. It encompasses "alternative sources of authority" as well as "self-conscious acts". It embraces both individual and collective experience. It is both prescriptive (in the form of theological treatises) and descriptive (in the forms of lyrical poems and autobiographies). As can be seen from the broad range of topics and methodological approaches represented in this handbook, mysticism is an umbrella large enough to shelter all of these things.

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When I teach a world literature survey to undergraduates, I center the course around an ongoing discussion of the canon. In fact, I let the students give oral reports and write term papers proposing their favorite authors for inclusion. This all started with the drastically revised *Norton Anthology of World Literature*, which presents traditional canonical figures alongside politically correct selections of whom, frankly, no one has ever heard. This *New Companion to Hispanic Mysticism* might perhaps be compared (in all modesty) to the new Norton anthology. We would never dream of publishing a handbook without essays on canonical genres and figures. But what's "new" about this handbook is its welcoming stance toward new arrivals to the critical landscape. Likewise, this volume combines the work of seasoned scholars with younger voices. Janus-like, it tries to face equally onto both sides of the Atlantic. Finally, an application section strengthens interdisciplinary ties by showing how key mystical terms can help us to understand early modern music, literature, and art. This multiplicity of genres may be seen, in turn, as a further expansion of the mystical canon.

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[16] Christina Lee, "Interrupted Mysticism in Cervantes's *Persiles*," pp. 389–90 of this volume. She cites Steven Ozment, *Mysticism and Dissent: Religious Ideology and Social Protest in the Sixteenth Century* (New Haven 1973), p. 13.

The volume is divided into three parts: Larger Trends, Specific Figures, and Interdisciplinary Applications. It opens with four masterful essays which illustrate the "survey" or "overview" approach methodologically. Fernando Durán's contribution on religious autobiography is anchored in the notion of genre as its unifying principle. Perhaps the most ambitious piece in this volume in terms of exhaustive coverage, José Adriano de Freitas Carvalho's magisterial treatment of Portuguese mysticism (delimited to include individuals who lived in Portugal, whether of Portuguese nationality or of foreign origin, but excluding Portuguese authors who lived and produced their works abroad) does not define itself by genre, but instead chronologically: it covers the period 1515–1630, which was indeed the apogee of mystical activity throughout much of the Hispanic world. Francisco Morales takes us to another corner of that world in his delightful exposition of the unique synthesis of medieval Christian and indigenous religion in New World Franciscan mystical practice. Finally, to round out this section, Alastair Hamilton encapsulates the history of an entire movement, *alumbradismo*, which flourished in the liminal space between heresy and orthodox practice.

The second division for the volume is the largest section. Perhaps methodologically this reflects the current preference within cultural studies for individual case histories as opposed to grand narratives. Personally I have always felt that the sweeping surveys are important to read first, in order to set the stage or establish a context for individual examples. The movement in this section is both chronological and geographical. It begins with Jessica Boon's revisionist study of the female preacher and visionary Mother Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534), a figure who appears earlier in Spain than most of the other protagonists of this volume. She is followed by entries on the two most canonical figures of Spanish mysticism, Saint John of the Cross and Saint Teresa of Ávila. These of course pertain to what is known as the first generation of the Carmelite Reform. To these "founding" figures I have chosen to add Saint Ignatius Loyola, whose often-ignored mystical side is explored admirably by Darcy Donahue. While busy founding a different religious order, the Society of Jesus, which was characterized by its members' active engagement with the world, Ignatius nonetheless valued mystical meditation and in fact instituted a method for practicing it in his *Spiritual Exercises*.

Moving on from the founders of Hispanic mysticism, this section also examines their heirs. An essay by Evelyn Toft describes the life and

writings of Cecilia del Nacimiento, a second-generation mystic of the Carmelite Reform. Her poems and songs were heavily influenced by her reading of Saint Teresa. The latter's impact on the entire Hispanic world can hardly be overestimated, as we see from Clara Herrera's essay on a Colombian nun who transplanted Teresa's ideas to a New World context. Here we see the reform movement, begun by Saint John of the Cross and Teresa, continuing like a ripple effect across the Atlantic Ocean and beyond. In this "second-generation" subsection may also be found an essay by Glyn Redworth on Luisa de Carvajal, a Spanish woman who became the first female Jesuit missionary to England. She has been interpreted as a spiritual daughter of Ignatius, in the same way that Cecilia del Nacimiento and Jerónima Nava y Saavedra were the spiritual descendants of Teresa de Jesús. Finally in this section we return to Portugal for a fascinating meditation on the perils of mysticism. This essay by Freddy Domínguez on the Monja de Lisboa allows us to glimpse the potential fate of any early modern practitioner of mysticism whose activities were proven to be fraudulent. Her example undoubtedly served as a cautionary tale to other would-be mystics who might otherwise have been tempted to follow in her footsteps.

The last section of this book, on Interdisciplinary Applications, looks at possible conjunctions of mysticism with other fields within cultural studies. Here can be found essays on literature, music, architecture, and even gardening. Who knew that mysticism bore such an intimate relationship to all of these things? This section begins with two related essays on Saint Teresa's treatments of gardens and the physical spaces of buildings in her works. As such, they offer close, nuanced, and sometimes even humorous takes on the intersections of mysticism with these other fields.

This pair of essays is followed by a second pair, this time on mysticism and literature ("literature" in this case being defined more traditionally, as creative or imaginative works of fiction). In the first one, Christina Lee focuses on one specific episode of Cervantes's Byzantine romance, the *Persiles*, in which she finds an instance of "interrupted mysticism" to be illustrative of the author's treatment of religion more generally. In the second, Elena del Río Parra seizes upon the trope of *suspensio animi* as it appears in multiple contexts, not limited to the early modern period (and in fact, not even limited to the realm of literature). Her all-embracing perspective shows the pervasiveness of certain *mentalités* inherited from our mystical forebears.

The volume concludes with an essay on music from Tess Knighton, extending the generic scope of the collection. Knighton's article on mysticism in sacred and popular music, with special reference to the mystical poetry of Fray Luis de León, serves to reinforce the idea of interconnectedness for all of these cultural phenomena. It is impossible to divorce literature from art, just as it is impossible to divorce poetry from music. Likewise (and this is one of the overall arguments of this handbook), it would be impossible to divorce mysticism from its larger cultural *milieu*. Mysticism happened within its surrounding culture, not outside of it. To pretend that these interrelated trends can be isolated in order to study them separately is to set oneself up for an exercise in futility.

PART ONE

LARGER TRENDS

RELIGIOUS AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Fernando Durán López

From ancient times—suffice it to mention the name of Saint Augustine—religion has been one of the principal motivations for writing an autobiography. In these personal narratives flow together two central streams of religious experience: the introspective and the political; in other words, the one which journeys to the inside of a person's conscience in search of self-knowledge and the one which goes out to seek a community with whom to share a system of values, formulating for one's peers a testimony of one's own acts with apologetic and proselytizing purposes. Autobiography, like hagiography, confers a narrative dimension to spirituality, simultaneously humanizing it by embodying it in individual *peripeteia*. It is not strange, then, that in Europe there would appear a high point of religious autobiographical writing, coinciding with the spiritual effervescence of the 16th century and the movements of reform or rupture which shook the church since the end of the Middle Ages.

In Spain this apex, which generated an unparalleled volume of texts in other countries,[1] was strictly determined by religious practices associated with the mysticism of cloistered nuns. The great majority of autobiographical texts fit into this category. In Hispanic Catholicism, autobiography would be not only a means of expressing spiritual restlessness and a more intense and purified devotion, but also a procedure of control and repression for ecclesiastical authorities (conventual, diocesan or Inquisitorial). Mystical effusion and ascetic mortification, the sacrament of penance, the pressures of the Inquisition, the necessity for nourishing a modern hagiography, and the proselytism of the reformed religious orders would be—as I shall try to explain in the following pages—the principal formative elements of Catholic autobiography in Golden Age Spain.

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[1] "D'après les recherches en cours, seule l'Italie de la même époque peut compter un nombre comparable d'autobiographies spirituelles" (Isabelle Poutrin, *Le voile et la plume: autobiographie et sainteté féminine dans L'Espagne Moderne* [Madrid, 1995], p. 8).

Thus, although the present essay is titled "Religious Autobiography", it will in reality describe its most characteristic manifestation, a much more limited concept which we can call *feminine conventual autobiography written from obedience*: that is, the autobiographical relation of the interior life and mystical experiences of a contemplative nun pertaining to a cloistered order (almost always reformed), written by mandate of a confessor or spiritual director. This is the model, authorized by Saint Teresa's example, which occasionally extends itself outside the convents to devout women—intensely spiritual, though not professing nuns—without supposing an essential alteration of the format. At the margin of this profile, there are about 20 autobiographical relations written by men of the church (characterized by a much greater thematic and literary variety) which it is appropriate to group together under the general rubric of *spiritual autobiography* or *religious autobiography*, since the experience of faith is certainly not limited to the life of contemplative nuns. Into these other modalities would also fit a short number of pieces divorced from Catholic orthodoxy which testify to different degrees of dissidence or rupture with the official church. I shall dedicate this essay to feminine conventual autobiography written from obedience, which is the genre that bears greater relevance in relation to Spanish Golden Age mysticism, but not without first alerting the reader to the existence and interest of those other works which form a more complete picture of Spanish religious life-writing in the Golden Age.[2]

External History of the Genre

From the middle of the 16th century, Spanish nuns wrote a large number of autobiographies which took spirituality as the material and form of their writing and reception. This spiritual genre, closely tied to other parallel literary practices (letters, diaries, general confessions, hagiographies, sermons, treatises on prayer, etc.), spread through the Hispanic territories of the Catholic Monarchy and its Indies, coming to be identified with the religious values of the Counter Reformation and enduring in the convents, without many apparent changes, until

[2] A much more extensive exposition of my arguments may be found in my recent monograph: Fernando Durán López, *Un cielo abreviado: introducción crítica a una historia de la autobiografía religiosa en España* (Madrid, 2007).

the beginning of the 20th century. Its high point is situated at the end of the 16th and the first half of the 17th centuries, in part thanks to the fact that it soon found a successful model: Saint Teresa of Jesus's *Book of Her Life*, published in 1588. Because of its extraordinary diffusion and literary greatness, the reformed Carmelite's work has obscured other examples of this persistent and profound autobiographical trend, which for the most part enjoyed only a limited circulation in manuscript: that is to say, they were more of an intraconventual than a social phenomenon, although they arose in a society where the ecclesiastical world had enormous weight. A precise understanding of the literary practice of Spanish Catholic spirituality in the early modern period thus implies an approximation to a whole series of works by many dozens of anonymous nuns, not just to the masterpiece of the Saint of Ávila.

On the quantitative level, the excellent monograph by Isabelle Poutrin,[3] based upon greater archival exploration than the earlier study by Manuel Serrano y Sanz (published at the beginning of the 20th century),[4] enumerates a *corpus* of 113 female authors who died before 1750, with only two of these properly pertaining to the 18th century. This *corpus* includes works with the original text preserved as well as extracted pieces, paraphrased or summarized in hagiographies and chronicles, along with a few proceeding from Inquisitorial sources; Poutrin cites another six of which she has only indirect knowledge. The greatest merit of this monograph is the establishment of continuity between what transpired in the confessional and the autobiographies and hagiographies which emerged from this context, as well as the relationship with contemporary currents of mystical theology and politics within the religious orders. Nonetheless, these 119 references could be expanded if we include other general or partial bibliographical sources containing indirect notices, extracts, etc. Thus it is possible to arrive at a list of 161 female authors,[5] which is still probably only

[3] Poutrin, *Le voile et la plume*.

[4] Manuel Serrano y Sanz, *Apuntes para una biblioteca de escritoras españolas desde el año 1401 al 1833*, 4 vols (Biblioteca de Autores Españoles) 268–71 (1903; repr. Madrid, 1975).

[5] See Durán López, *Un cielo abreviado*, chapter 5; there I offer a composite list of Poutrin's *corpus* plus 42 other names which complete it, with varying degrees of reliability. Furthermore, this study is the only one which enumerates masculine authors (up to 18 of them). It also includes an inventory of religious autobiographies from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries (chapters 7 and 8). For more information about authors

a small fraction of what was written during centuries by hundreds of nuns whose texts remain unpublished or lost.

If we pass from a quantitative to a qualitative study of the essential texts, we must have recourse to another key monograph, that of Sonja Herpoel,[6] who studies in depth a select *corpus* of 26 autobiographies which could serve as a canon: works preserved in their complete original version with a clear narrative structure (she excludes the *relations of favors* and other analogous subgenres).[7] Herpoel analyses the texts from a more literary than spiritual point of view, individualizing each author; her readings, with a feminist orientation which is not doctrinaire, succeed above all in documenting the forms of resistance and self-expression favored by these women within a coercive masculine world.

In terms of impact on the genre's origin and evolution, the weight of Teresa of Ávila is an unassailable fact. The institutionalization of the autobiography written from obedience is born with Saint Teresa and her followers among the discalced Carmelites as a form of devotion integrated into the ecclesiastical order, although subjected to close vigilance by mother superiors, theologians and Inquisitors. Poutrin has counted 26 female authors who claim to have read her *Life*, but there were unquestionably many more; and the same occurred with confessors and hagiographers. The Teresian model contributed something essential to Catholic spirituality of that moment: a path to sanctity

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from this same time period, see also my *Catálogo comentado de la autobiografía española (siglos XVIII y XIX)* (Madrid, 1997); "Adiciones al catálogo de la autobiografía española en los siglos XVIII y XIX," *Boletín de la unidad de estudios biográficos* 4 (1999): 73–98; and "Nuevas adiciones al catálogo de la autobiografía española en los siglos XVIII y XIX (segunda serie)," *Signa* 13 (2004): 395–495.

[6] Sonja Herpoel, *A la zaga de Santa Teresa: autobiografías por mandato* (Amsterdam, 1999).

[7] This possible canon consists of the following authors (I cite them by their religious names): Ana de Jesús (*c.*1560–1617), Ana de San Agustín (1555–1624), Ana de San Bartolomé (1549–1626), Ana María de San José (1581–1632), Ángela María de la Concepción (1649–90), an anonymous Dominican (*c.*1650–17??), Antonia de Jesús (*c.*1593–1627), Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza (1566–1614), Catalina de Cristo (1544–94), Catalina de Jesús (1540–86), Estefanía de la Encarnación (1597–1665), Inés de la Encarnación (1564–1634), Isabel de Jesús (*c.*1586–1648), Jerónima de San José (d. 1661), Lucía de Jesús (*c.*1601–53), María Bautista (1543–1603), María de la Cruz (1563–1638), María de San José (1548–1603), Mariana de Jesús (Navarro) (1565–1624), Mariana de San José (1568–1638), María de Ágreda (María de Jesús) (1602–65), Mauricia del Santísimo Sacramento (*c.*1600–74), María Salinas (1602–57), Teresa de Jesús María (1592–1641), Teresa de Ávila (1515–82), and María Vela y Cueto (1561–1617).

reined in by ecclesiastical authority and thus, a valid model for other devout women. Doubts about the propriety of these visionary nuns describing their interior lives and their experiences with God never disappeared, but the church assumed that this practice offered more doctrinal advantages than dangers and encouraged it. In that sense, in spiritual autobiographical writing the exemplary value of Teresa of Jesus has a much profounder dimension than mere literary influence: she projects a double authority, as saint and as literary woman; and in fact, she herself was incorporated into the list of apparitions which subsequent nuns experienced during their mystical transports.

The far-ranging success of Teresian autobiography proves the existence of fertile terrain among Spanish nuns who found in the Reformer the necessary impulse for venting their restlessness. Herpoel affirms that such an autobiographical apogee "is not due only to the influence of Saint Teresa"[8] and suspects that perhaps she was not the first to write her autobiography.[9] In effect, if the precedence of Saint Teresa in terms of exemplary value is undoubted, her chronological priority is less certain. We do not know in reality which was the first Spanish nun to describe her interior life,[10] but it is necessary to speak of a

[8] "No se debe únicamente al influjo de Santa Teresa" (Sonja Herpoel, "Bajo la amenaza de la Inquisición: escritoras españolas en el Siglo de Oro," in *España, teatro y mujeres: estudios dedicados a Henk Oostendorp*, ed. Martin Gosman and Hub Hermans [Amsterdam, 1989], p. 127).

[9] Herpoel, *A la zaga*, p. 39.

[10] Sometimes priority is given to the Franciscan Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534), a visionary whose revelations were recorded through dictation to one of her disciples. Her historical importance is much less than that of Teresa, although Poutrin includes her in her corpus on the same level: "l'influence de ces deux femmes sur les contemplatives qui les ont suivies doit être soulignée; elle éclaire certains des caractères essentiels de l'écriture autobiographique" (Poutrin, *Le voile et la plume*, p. 23). This question, on the other hand, is limited to feminine writing, since (although it is seldom mentioned in this context) the autobiography of Saint Ignatius Loyola (1491–1556) precedes that of Saint Teresa. Saint Ignatius's work was not published until centuries later, but was dictated between 1553–55. This was also the date of the first embryonic version of the *Life* of Saint Teresa, which would attain its mature form in 1562, and which went on accumulating more changes until the printed version was published in 1588. It is also not customary to mention the splendid *Confesión de un pecador* by Constantino Ponce de la Fuente (1502–58), anterior to both of these, which was published three times: in 1547, 1554, and 1556. This work, undoubtedly the most interesting example of Spanish Golden Age masculine spiritual autobiography, pertains to a dissident movement outside of official Catholicism. The Inquisition pursued both the book and its author, who died in the prisons of the Tribunal. His *Confessions* are constructed as a penitential monologue of a sinner before Christ, without ecclesiastical intermediaries. They dig deeply (in emotive form) into man's feeling of guilt and the resultant contrast with divine mercy; there is no chronological relation,

general movement in the period, an intense frenzy of activity of which Saint Teresa is merely the most salient and successful representative. In that generative environment what is essential is the transfer of mystical experience to autobiographical writing, which was undoubtedly imposed upon the nuns because theology recognized for women a role as recipients of spiritual graces, but not the priesthood or teaching appointments. If cloistered women were going to play a central part in the religious life of the 16th century, but they were going to be denied the right to participate in doctrinal debates about theology, then their role could only be channeled into the path of practice, of lived experience; and in this case its written manifestation would be not a theological treatise, but an autobiographical account.

The publication in 1588 of the Teresian *Life* ratifies and institutionalizes this profile of the contemplative nun, mystic and writer. From this point on there are frequent imitations, which follow the path of the Carmelite reform and soon extend themselves into other renovated orders, such as the Augustinians, Clares and Dominicans. Herpoel[11] summarizes this trajectory among her 26 authors: five works in the last decades of the 16th century, all by Carmelites of the circle closest to Teresa of Ávila, written schematically, simple and brief. In the first half of the 17th century there comes the peak, with double the number of works produced than were generated in the second half of the same century. In this phase the genre spreads to other orders. By the 17th century, female authors have gained literary self-consciousness and exploit the possibilities of writing, in contrast to the greater humility of their precursors, while they simultaneously augment their didactic purposes. The second half of the century witnesses a decline in the genre and more evident instrumentalization on the part of ecclesiastical authorities.

Other analyses confirm this pattern: the most productive periods were the end of the 16th and, above all, the first half of the 17th centuries, when spiritual autobiography was, according to Poutrin, a mas-

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nor hardly any narrative material, but instead a hymn-like style. Ponce de la Fuente represents a previous line, distinct and divergent from the autobiography written from obedience established as a genre by Saint Teresa; although both begin from the same place of spiritual restlessness and assume, in different ways, the Augustinian model. Ponce de la Fuente is an example, perhaps, of what Spanish spiritual autobiography could have been if it had not been constrained by the precept of obedience and the frame of the religious orders.

[11] Herpoel, *A la zaga*, pp. 50–68.

sive phenomenon.[12] At that point such works were identified fully with the religious context in which they were generated, fitting into a system of thought which had an eye toward total control over society. On the other hand, the internal evolution of the genre goes hand-in-hand with the changes experienced by Spanish Catholic spirituality: movements of spiritual renewal at the beginning and Counter-Reformation rigor later on. The process described by Herpoel of progressive self-consciousness and mastery of rhetorical mechanisms by these authors is accompanied—although it might seem contradictory—by an increase in ecclesiastical control over these texts. Spiritual autobiography, which was born with Saint Teresa in an environment of renewed and purified religiosity (one that proved threatening for the more traditional church), was progressively channeled toward didactic and exemplary ends. In this form, these texts hardly offered risks or challenges to prevailing orthodoxy.

As José L. Sánchez Lora affirms, the currents of mystical renewal were those of the 16th century, while in the 17th the Counter-Reformation program assumed an exhaustive control which "denaturalized" that renewal. In the constitutions of the feminine branches of the Franciscan order from 1639, mental prayer—a basic pillar of mysticism and its autobiographical reflection—is imposed, according to the same routine criteria which regulate every activity in the convent.[13] If this is so, the conclusion would be that there is no contradiction between an increase in ecclesiastical power—and thus the capacity for control over feminine spirituality—and a simultaneous increase of mastery by these writing nuns over the resources of their literary enterprise and their possibilities for personal expression. And if there is no contradiction it is because, as we shall see, feminine writing responds better to the goals of ecclesiastical power when it is more self-conscious.

Autobiography, Hagiography and Proselytizing

Another key point in these autobiographies is their essentially exclusive manuscript dissemination within the convents. As a literary form, the circuit of writing and reception almost always unfolds within the

[12] Poutrin, *Le voile et la plume*, p. 23.
[13] José L. Sánchez Lora, *Mujeres, conventos y formas de la religiosidad barroca* (Madrid, 1988), p. 234.

limited circle of each religious order. The *Life* of Saint Teresa was published with great success in 1588, but we have to advance far into the 17th century to see similar texts published in a direct and complete form. Poutrin lists only five other published works, those of Jerónima de la Ascensión (1661), Isabel de Jesús (1672), María de la Antigua (1678), Hipólita de Jesús (1679–83), and Isabel de Jesús (Díaz) (1685). Poutrin attributes such a scarcity of printed texts to the distrust of priests and the public toward autonomous feminine writing: the name of a male confessor or hagiographer was required on the cover of the book, taking responsibility for the contents, to establish the text's authority.[14] Thus the female figure of the writer / mystic is recognized, but there is hesitation when it comes to giving her the status of author; and the text is always preceded by a dense curtain of theological approbations and licenses.

In this way, the most frequent form in which conventual autobiographies came to be known was through extracts, summaries or citations in hagiographies or funeral sermons in which the public was shown the lives of the nuns most distinguished for their devotion, virtue or mysticism. In fact, in very high proportion the mandate to the nuns to write their lives was justified by the desire to collect materials so that in the future their hagiographers would elaborate public texts, through which these women would become famous (to the greater glory of their congregations). It is important to emphasize the *esprit de corps* latent in these mandates and the eagerness of the orders to find, within their walls, female saints who would serve as praiseworthy examples. Each order tried to grow by attracting adepts, founding more convents, marking its own tradition and incorporating *beatas* and saints into its private pantheon.

It is not a coincidence that these autobiographies are concentrated in a few orders, among which the most distinguished are the discalced Carmelites and the recollected Augustinians: young congregations, powerful and innovative, who fought to affirm themselves in the face of their older competitors, as well as the unreformed and masculine branches of their own orders. These are the ones also who started the most ambitious hagiographical and historiographical projects, in the context of which this autobiographical writing takes on its primary meaning: to create a tradition of sanctity. Poutrin speaks of "autobio-

[14] Poutrin, *Le voile et la plume*, p. 252.

graphical writing workshops" to refer to certain young reformed convents from which emerged numerous spiritual autobiographies (she attributes these to both "historiographical activity and hagiographical preview").[15] An evident example is the case of Fray Alonso de Villerino, who included various autobiographies of nuns in his great chronicle of Augustinian recollection in three voluminous folios.[16]

The dozens or hundreds of texts which did not pass through this filter because their female authors did not reach a sufficient level of fame or exemplary value remained forever forgotten or lost in conventual archives, read only by the eyes of their confessors.

Rhetoric of Obedience

The crisis manifested in the Renaissance and Reformation illuminates in Europe a new spiritual relationship of the Christian with God and with her conscience. This new relationship is individualistic, based upon a direct dialogue with the divinity and a greatly exacerbated sense of sin. Protestants, by suppressing the sacrament of confession, interiorize the double figure of confessor and penitent, so that the individual conscience embodies not only the temptation to sin, but also the judicial authority which examines its own morality. The spiritual autobiographies written in abundance by Protestants in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries are thus constructed according to a narrative itinerary which begins by establishing the sinfulness of the protagonist, who revels in his moral squalor and ingratitude toward God (who causes his rebirth as a Christian). *Personal* conversion is the nucleus and meaning of Protestant autobiography.

But in Catholic societies of the 16th century, this does not occur. Moral consciousness, external to the individual—embodied institutionally by the confessor in the sacrament of penance—is not only not eliminated, but in fact has its power reinforced by the Counter Reformation. In fact, that power is multiplied in a complex series of hierarchical figures: the spiritual director, the prelate of the convent or order, the Inquisitor, the bishop, the theologian… At the beginning of

[15] "Ateliers d'écriture autobiographique"; "la prévision hagiographique et l'activité historiographique" (Poutrin, *Le voile et la plume*, pp. 131 and 133).

[16] Alonso de Villerino, *Esclarecido solar de las religiosas reformadas de nuestro Padre San Agustín, y vidas de las insignes hijas de sus conventos*, 3 vols (Madrid, 1690–94).

the 19th century, José María Blanco White explained this idea once he had already converted to Protestantism: "in a country where every person's conscience is in the keeping of another, in an interminable succession of moral trusts, the individual conscience cannot be under the steady discipline of self-governing principle: all that is practised is *obedience* to the opinions of others, and even that obedience is inseparably connected with the idea of a dispensing power".[17] Conventual autobiography illustrates in exemplary fashion this resistance to interiorizing the consciousness of sin. This genre is based upon obedience; although in principle this obedience is only disciplinary in nature—the acknowledgment of a hierarchy, as in the army—it immediately becomes sublimated to a deeper level when its moral correlative is formulated: humility. External submission leads, then, to an internal virtue which is the very essence of the relationship of the Christian with God and the church. From this correlation between obedience and humility are derived the genre's other constitutive characteristics.

The first essential characteristic is the *mandate*. A nun does not write her autobiography if someone with spiritual authority over her does not order it, since doing it on her own initiative would be an unacceptable lack of humility. Only confessors and directors of conscience—men with theological authority—can judge who has the obligation (never the right) to offer a testimony of her faith. This mandate is directed to those who have excelled in the religious life by founding new convents or reformed orders, by an intense mystical life, etc. Although the success and spread of the genre meant that at times it was practiced by totally anonymous nuns, the great majority of the authors are figures who stand out from their religious context: saints, *beatas*, founders, reformers, and mystics. Sometimes the mandate seeks elements of judgment upon initiating the spiritual direction, the first act of which would be, then, to order the writing of an autobiography. More frequently, however, it is the fruit of a longer process, produced as a spiritual exercise and examination of conscience by female penitents, who sometimes adopt the model of a general confession in writing.

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[17] Joseph Blanco White, *The Life of the Rev. Joseph Blanco White, Written by Himself with Portions of His Correspondence*, 1, ed. John Hamilton Thom (London, 1845), p. 33.

The one who is ordering the autobiography is normally at the same time its intended audience, and frequently also the one who keeps it and exercises power over it—a power which includes requesting amplifications, eliminating passages, censuring deviations, ordering its destruction, showing the manuscript to others, etc., without necessarily sharing this decision with its author. Furthermore, the writer of the autobiography composes her work not only by echoing a tradition of similar pieces, but also by responding to both an explicit and an implicit questionnaire from her director which can determine the work's content, structure, and focus. Once the author is dead, this same confessor normally takes it upon himself to write hagiographies and sermons about the virtuous departed, using her manuscript *Life* as his material. In this sense, spiritual directors participate fully in the creative process. Interpretations of this singularly shared authorship between confessor and nun vary: some scholars, among them Poutrin, believe that in this complex interaction there is evident a complicity and collaboration on both sides;[18] another scholarly current, particularly of the feminist orientation, sees instead a rivalry between coercive masculine power and a female author who seeks indirect means of resistance and personal expression.[19]

The relationships of power and obedience are still present in the prefatory command to write the autobiography. An infinite number of sources of authority can also intervene, among them convents, orders and dioceses; judges and examiners of the Inquisition; and ultimately Rome. Frequently these authorities maintain opposing criteria and fight among themselves. Another of the principal functions of the autobiography written from obedience is so-called "spiritual discernment", that is to say, control exerted over the orthodoxy of visionary

[18] "Ne serait-il pas abusif, là où le couple auteur-confesseur est stable, de considérer ce dernier comme co-auteur du texte" (Poutrin, *Le voile et la plume*, p. 129). I am of the same opinion. See the detailed analysis of a concrete case of a relationship between an autobiograpical nun and her successive confessors in Fernando Durán López, *Tres autobiografías religiosas españoles del siglo XVIII: Sor Gertrudis Pérez Muñoz, Fray Diego José de Cádiz, José Higueras* (Cádiz, 2003), ch. 2.

[19] Sonja Herpoel, although she admits that "es lícito suponer que las intervenciones del mandatario modifican sustancialmente el discurso de ciertas religiosas" (*A la zaga*, p. 98), insists on a strategy of the nuns to free themselves from this repressive influence. The relationship between confessor and penitent, she affirms, "no es siempre todo lo harmónica como lo sugiere I. Poutrin" (Herpoel, *A la zaga*, p. 101). In fact, Herpoel calls these authors "las víctimas de los confesores" and "el blanco preferido de los eclesiásticos" (*A la zaga*, p. 222).

nuns to contain conventual mysticism within official channels, discerning "authentic" mystical experiences from those of a heretical or demonic nature.[20] Here the Inquisition plays an important role by virtue of being the final guarantor of dogmatic purity, having the power of life and death over both female authors and their confessors, and being able to intervene at any moment with jurisdiction superior to any other ecclesiastical authority in the country. As Poutrin has studied,[21] this confusion of powers generates an uncertainty and tension in the nuns which is reflected in the rhetoric that is so characteristic of this genre. On the one hand, these women are encouraged to practice a supernatural and mystical spirituality; but at the same time, perceived threats seem to multiply in response to possible "deviations". These women are never sure whether they will be considered saints or charlatans. This dynamic is translated into fear, mental disorder, or flight toward an interior universe, emotions which are detectible in their works through frequent allusions to the Inquisition, to possible false visions, to their horror of falling into heresy, or to the process of submitting whatever they write to the higher authorities.

Although it might appear strange, the other possible readers of the text—the sisters of the convent and the order, the public in general, posterity—bear a much lesser weight, precisely because none of these groups generates a relationship of power nor requires obedience. But, although remote, these implied readers are still present. To them is directed the didactic and exemplary message of the autobiography.

As for God, although at times the authors most imbued with the Augustinian model direct themselves to him in a hymn-like style, the direct interlocutor of the *Confessions* has become, for nuns of the Golden Age, a far-off listener, filtered through His earthly representatives, persons and institutions authorized to supervise this dialogue. But paradoxically, God is in another sense closer to these autobiographical

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[20] For Herpoel, this is the most important motivation on the part of the church: "al lado de la modélica, se destaca la función represiva de la autobiografía, su objetivo de regulación social" ("Bajo la amenaza," p. 130); "sin excluir de antemano otras posibilidades creo que la imperiosa necesidad de control ideológico llevó a las autoridades religiosas a la progresiva explotación de todas y cada una de las posibilidades del procedimiento de la autobiografía por mandato" (*A la zaga*, p. 81). In contrast, Poutrin believes that those priests who were hostile to mysticism did not order nuns to write their autobiographies; therefore the mandate implies an *a priori* approval of the author's mysticism, so that the function of control is less important than the search for materials for a hagiographical project (*Le voile et la plume*, pp. 124–25).

[21] Poutrin, *La voile et la plume*, pp. 100–06.

texts than the Bishop of Hippo perceived Him to be, for He manifests Himself through supernatural experiences. To the Spanish mystics of the early modern period, God speaks at all hours (not only God, but also the Virgin Mary, the saints, the virtuous departed, and the demons); for these women aim to be something that Augustine never was: prophets. God uses them as intermediaries to speak to men, but at the same time there are many other intermediaries between them and the men.

In sum, the spiritual experience of these nuns becomes a tortuous game of power within a bureaucratized hierarchy, full of fissures and contradictory competencies. The autobiographer appears to be the least decisive figure when it comes time to configure a discourse about her own life; between herself and her writing are interposed her confessors as well as all the dignitaries of the church. In an autobiography written from obedience, almost everyone has something to say—even Satan.

Life Stories

Judging from their contents, Isabelle Poutrin[22] sees in the *autobiographies written from obedience* two types of discourse: *life stories*, which would include a narration of infancy, the difficulties of adolescence, vocation, entry into a convent, interior progress, conflicts of conscience, temptations, penances, relationships with confessors and superiors, pious readings, etc.; and *accounts of favors or graces*, which center around the exposition and commentary of ecstatic experiences, visions, mental prayer, and mystical transports, sometimes in the form of a diary or "account of conscience".

Both modalities exist separately, but they have a strong propensity to intermingle: the account of favors prolongs a life story, or a life story is constructed as a relation of favors within the flimsiest narrative frame. In general, the style almost always presents a very attenuated narrative, which on occasion minimizes to such an extent the anecdotal components and descriptions of the surrounding world that it becomes indistinguishable from a hymn or doctrinal treatise of mystical theology. Thus one of the characteristics of these pieces, in contrast to lay autobiographies, is the little importance given to external life and

[22] Poutrin, *La voile et la plume*, pp. 18–20.

anecdotal narration. It is notable in particular that, although many of these authors were assiduous writers, an account of their other works is usually omitted due to humility's exigencies. This is a logical option from a religious point of view, considering that a narration about the path of perfection leading toward God implies *contemptus mundi* carried to its maximum expression. This moral choice implies also a stylistic and narrative decision.

I will first describe some characteristics of the "life stories" in these conventual autobiographies. They are stories which hardly include details of space and time, and in which the characters are often not cited by their names. It would not be possible to locate many of these autobiographies in a concrete epoch, place or convent if we did not have external data to give us this information. Such silence expresses the distance of the autobiography written from obedience with respect to lay forms of the genre, which were conceived as prolix registers of deeds that gain credibility by force of detail. On the same principle, we note the frequent absence of a genealogical account—that is to say, the initial mention of birth and the names and states in life of parents and ancestors. This exclusion was already present in the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine and is due to a conception of identity according to which the only birth that counts for a Christian is the birth of faith, making everyone equal. This anti-genealogical principle operates, nonetheless, with a contradiction: the obsession (characteristic of this period) with "blood purity", which makes it necessary to note that one has been born into a family of Old Christians and devout persons.

Neither is there normally an account of infancy; when it does appear, it is always very brief. Isabelle Poutrin affirms that only 18 works in her extensive corpus include this element. Furthermore, in these few, the purpose is not to trace the construction of a personality—like in modern autobiography—but to register early indications of a desire for perfection that would lead later on to the religious life.[23] Infancy is only important for its anticipation of sanctity; and this relates to another essential point of these autobiographies: the replacement of conversion by vocation. In spite of the Augustinian model and the enormous importance give in modern Christian spirituality to a transition which presupposes the sinner's disillusionment, conventual

[23] Poutrin, "Souvenirs d'enfance: l'apprentissage de la sainteté dans l'Espagne moderne," *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* 23 (1987): 331–54, at p. 332.

autobiographies (with the limited exception of Saint Teresa) do not develop a narrative model which centers around conversion, as occurs with Protestant autobiography.[24] It is more frequent to see recourse to a different narrative paradigm, which we could call "immaculatist": the hallmarks of virtue appear from birth and infancy with visible signs of future sanctity, so that a vocation emerges at the earliest age. Saints are preferably not just chaste, but virgins. Thus the account paints a picture of pious infancy, a brief period of adolescent weakness—almost always of ingenuous innocence—and a not-so-abrupt turn (vocation, not conversion) which leads to scorn for the world and entry into the convent.

The rest of the life story is then the account of a religious life devoid of anecdote, frequently organized by thematic grouping rather than chronologically. This is another obvious difference with respect to lay autobiography (almost always masculine) in which the active life bears greater weight; this implies a linear, worldly notion of time that gives structure to the narrative. The concept of time which predominates in the autobiography written from obedience, almost always the work of contemplative nuns, is of a more primitive nature: a morosely internal idea of time, cyclical, ahistorical, without dates or events to serve as points of reference.

Accounts of Favors

Moving on to the other dimension of these autobiographies, their "relations of favors" component, it is worth repeating that in these, supernatural experiences play a central role. They are called variously "divine favors", "mercies", "graces" or "news", which technically mystical theology then calls "particular revelations" or "private revelations". Sometimes they become the only theme of the work, turning the autobiography into a bizarre catalogue of miracles and apparitions. "Autobiographical nun" becomes, in this context, synonymous with "mystical nun" since (to judge from these accounts) the cloistered sisters lived one great perpetual epiphany. Each day and almost every hour they were assaulted with visions, voices, prodigies, prophecies, stigmata, demonic temptations, symbolic dreams, illuminations of

[24] See Poutrin, *Le voile et la plume*, p. 90.

dogma or Biblical passages, etc., culminating at times in the grandiose experience of mystical matrimony between the soul of the seer and God.

Although it is supposed that the nuns were unlettered, at times they demonstrate a great familiarity with the nuances and vocabulary of mystical theology, in large part assimilated through prolonged contact with these materials by way of their confessors. For these women it is vital to dominate this language so as not to fall into heresy and to be able to anticipate potential theological objections. Here we see the repressive function of autobiography which I have already mentioned: the use of this writing as a means of "discernment" between authentic visionaries and charlatans, between visions inspired by God and those sent by the devil. Particular efforts were made to stave off the danger inherent for any spiritual nun—that of illuminism, a mystical activity which, by means of methodical mental prayer, leads to a sudden divine illumination (the exclusive fruit of God's grace). The persecution of "quietists" and *alumbrados* in the 16th century kept alive the urgent need to remain alert to any possible deviation of contemplative mysticism, since its limits were so blurry.

There was an intense theological debate, of great relevance for the autobiography written from obedience, about whether or not private revelations should be accepted as genuine. There was a similar argument over the criteria for discerning good revelations from bad ones. Some theologians accepted and encouraged the revelations, and these were logically less rigid in their control of the nuns: a good representative of this position is the Jesuit Luis de la Puente, who stood behind some important autobiographies and hagiographies of the 17th century. Another faction, in contrast, considered private revelations to be the pernicious fruit of nuns and confessors awarding themselves divine attributions. These authorities proposed very restricted criteria for accepting the revelations as genuine. In this more cautious camp we find both the affective mysticism of figures such as Saint John of the Cross as well as the rationalist focus of theologians such as Martín del Río at the end of the 16th century and Eusebio Amort in the 18th.[25] The proliferation of miraculous autobiographies and hagiographies in

[25] An excellent commentary on this fascinating question may be found in the work of Poutrin (*Le voile et la plume*, pp. 61–69) and, more generally, in that of Sánchez Lora (*Mujeres, conventos y formas*), which distinguishes different ascetic and mystical currents.

the 17th century established the triumph of the more accepting theological currents; their decline and increasingly formulaic tendencies in the 18th century were evidence of the eventual victory of a more rigid view. Within the *corpus* of conventual autobiography itself one may distinguish two tendencies: a minority of affective mysticism, sober and centered more upon prayer and mortification than on ecstasy (this was typified by Saint Teresa and the Carmelites); and the majority, stemming from Franciscan tradition, which were based on an imaginative and sensorial mysticism, exuberant in the supernatural and predisposed to physical manifestations of religious enthusiasm. But for both of these tendencies there is a common element: sanctity, and a perfection which reflects the desire for supernatural validation. This is acquired only through the practice of mental prayer.

Beside the mystical experience proper, there is in these autobiographies also an intense ascetic dimension: the accounts of penances and mortifications of both body and spirit become larger as we immerse ourselves in the Baroque religiosity of the Counter Reformation. Fasts, privations, whips, flagellations… these are merely the softest part of a technique of self-inflicted suffering which attains a degree of violence that could seem perverse to our modern eyes. According to Sánchez Lora,[26] a heightened *ascesis* accompanies the decline of true contemplative mysticism during the first half of the 16th century. The performance of physical mortification would be, in this sense, an extreme example of the realistic meditation preached by the Jesuits: from the "composition of place" practiced in the imagination, one would pass to a real representation of the scene, acted out with corporal deeds. Nevertheless, although this theory would have to be proven, I believe it could be affirmed that these autobiographies are more sparing in their relation of mortifications than are hagiographies written by their contemporaries.

Rebellions and Subversions

The autobiography written from obedience is based upon stripping the protagonist of her individuality and attributing to the action of Providence her possible merits and virtues. But at the same time, the

[26] Sánchez Lora, *Mujeres, conventos y formas*, pp. 241–51.

command to write these works is directed to women who have previously stood out individually in some crucial aspect of religious life. There is a latent contradiction here, noted by James Amelang: "two apparently contradictory terms constitute the most salient characteristics of this spirituality: reclusion and activism".[27] In effect, these authors are often women of strong personality, such as Teresa of Ávila;[28] but when it comes to writing their lives, they must ground themselves in the forcible passivity of one who humbles herself and presents herself as the blind intermediary of Providence.

This contradiction flourishes in these texts by means of an abundance of metaliterary reflections in which the author justifies why she writes and tries to foist upon God or her confessor a certain responsibility for the sin of pride and vanity which lurks in the act of writing. Fernando Lázaro Carreter expressed this very well on affirming that the diffuse structure of Teresa's *Life* gives way "to a 'restless metadiscourse', to a continued reflection upon discourse as an indomitable object".[29] There is a whole rhetoric based upon fear of the self and the moral dangers of writing. From this arises the affectation of practicing a plain style, with rectifications and hesitations coming before any affirmation, the eternal discussion about the incommunicability of the ineffable, the war with metaphors, etc. For Herpoel this rhetoric is a procedure of self-censure by negation to women of authority in spiritual matters;[30] and it is undoubtable that, beneath these protestations of humility, the "I" flourishes in one manner or another, at times unconsciously, at times with daring strategies. The most fruitful line of critical inquiry in recent years has pointed out those strategies which subvert and relativize the official rhetoric of obedience and the self's annihilation.

The autobiography written from obedience was, despite all this, one of the few means of self-expression available in Hapsburg Spain for

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[27] James S. Amelang, "Los usos de la autobiografía: monjas y beatas en la Cataluña moderna," in *Historia y género: las mujeres en la Europa moderna y contemporánea*, ed. J. S. Amelang and Mary Nash (Valencia, 1990), p. 198.

[28] "Aventurières du surnaturel, les mystiques de l'époque moderne ont souvent été de remarquables femmes d'action" (Poutrin, *Le voile et la plume*, p. 275).

[29] "A un 'metadiscurso inquieto', a una continuada reflexión sobre el discurso como objeto indomeñable" (Fernando Lázaro Carreter, "Santa Teresa de Jesús, escritora [el *Libro de la Vida*]," in *Actas del Congreso Internacional Teresiano*, vol. 1 [Salamanca, 1983], p. 22).

[30] See Herpoel, *A la zaga*, p. 107; and also Poutrin, *Le voile et la plume*, p. 136.

restless women, for whom there hardly existed other alternatives to conventual life. The convent can be experienced as a prison, but also as a refuge, the only purely feminine space in this society. Within this frame, mystical activity—and thus the autobiography which emerges from it—is a potential realm of power for women. Along these lines, some feminist readings insist that the ability to represent oneself through mystical autobiography questions the masculine hierarchy by creating (as justified by these spiritual faculties) a personal space, a specifically feminine hierarchy and society, as well as a mode of writing that permits women to represent themselves to themselves, to the world and to God.[31] This is perhaps a very oppressive version of the celebrated "room of one's own" in which Virginia Woolf encoded the key to feminine writing; but at the end of the day, the cell of a convent is also, in some sense, one's own room.

The capacity to receive and relate divine messages is the key to many nuns' pretentions to achieve religious authority, for the spiritual experience is not complete until it is communicated in writing. In spite of the fact that the division of functions limited the visionary nuns to being a passive channel of divine messages and their humble narrators in plain style—leaving their interpretation to confessors and theologians—writing introduces a qualitative leap, since the problem of feminine authority does not locate itself in visionary activity, but in the faculty of writing about it. The case of Saint Teresa is exemplary: her evident literary vocation contradicts any image of an illiterate nun who writes from obligation, as a penance. It is she who consecrates irreversibly the necessary relationship between being a mystic and being a writer, giving way to a type of sanctity tied to the act of writing.[32] Many of the nuns who followed her example have left behind an impressive volume of works.

In spite of the controls to which it is submitted, the task of writing concedes an opportunity to elaborate the spiritual experience intellectually.

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[31] Margaret L. King announces, perhaps with excessive enthusiasm, that "los conventos (comunidades de vírgenes) eran, a pesar de sus limitaciones, el mejor medio de conseguir la autonomía y la expresión femenina. El monacato femenino era la institución que ofrecía más posibilidades a la autonomía y la dignidad de las mujeres de la Europa cristiana" (Margaret L. King, *Mujeres renacentistas: la búsqueda de un espacio* [Madrid, 1993], p. 129).

[32] "À partir de Thérèse d'Avila les voies de la sainteté passèrent par la rédaction de textes qui adoptaient souvent la forme autobiographique et dont le caractère inspiré se trouvait hautement valorisé" (Poutrin, *Le voile et la plume*, p. 77).

And once the relationship is established between a mystical nun and a confessor with theological authority, it can be conducted through very different channels, as Amelang notes: "the relationship between authors and their spiritual 'directors' was not one of unidirectional control which emanated from above and was received passively below. On the contrary, […] it allows a glimpse of a relationship which was, frankly, complex. In some cases it is even legitimate to ask who exactly was dominating whom".[33] Furthermore, a nun could benefit from the complex hierarchization of the church (with the rivalries and multiple jurisdictions which characterized it) to find a priest who was conducive to her objectives, without having to conform forcibly to one who contradicted them. Due to the presence of distinct masculine authorities and to the perpetual shadow of the Inquisition, the process of validating a spiritual autobiography was never complete. It was always open to one more revision, to a denunciation, or to a new theological validation. This implied a threat to the nun, but also the possibility of finding interlocutors who were better disposed toward her. Sometimes the opposite occurred: it was the confessor who, trying to be the one who discovered the next Saint Teresa, induced the nun to a mystical activity which was not spontaneous for her.[34]

The intimate relationship between confessor and nun, although weakened on the level of physical contact after Tridentine guidelines stipulating rigorous separation of the sexes, generates on the psychological level ambiguous feelings, covering human passions beneath the appearance of a spiritual bond. It was not infrequent for the visionary to feel a fascination toward her confessor (or vice versa) and for there to develop an obsessive dependency—which did not necessarily have to be consciously erotic—but which formed an inseparable part of the process through which the autobiography took shape. The intense spiritual exploration between a nun and a priest who were on good terms with each other could form between them a current of emotions not too distinct from what Freud called "transference" between a patient and psychoanalyst. This relationship, which could be

[33] "La relación entre las autoras y sus 'directores' espirituales no fue la de un control unidireccional que emanaba de arriba y se recibía pasivamente abajo. Por el contrario, […] deja entrever una relación francamente compleja. Incluso en algunos casos es legítimo preguntarse quién exactamente dominaba a quién" (Amelang, "Los usos de la autobiografía," pp. 198–99).

[34] See Amelang, "Los usos de la autobiografía," p. 200.

one of antagonism or complicity, is the origin of many of the conflicts that mysticism provokes. Frequently, the pair acts as a unit when confronted by ecclesiastical authorities, in particular those of the convent itself.

Supernatural interventions also permit a certain control by the nun over her writing: frequently it is these divine messages which order her to write or resolve her doubts about obeying the order to do it. To the identical strategy of hiding the human mandate of the confessor beneath a divine mandate responds another theme of these works: taking down dictation by supernatural means, a pose which attempts to liberate the author from responsibility for what is written. In spite of the time transpired since the actual occurrence of the event being narrated (or the illiteracy of the nun, or the trap of a poor memory), "revealed" writing authenticates the account and bestows authority. This turns the authors into prophets, but it also puts them in grave danger if they are not believed. Another manner of obtaining control and authority was to offer within mystical experience itself a concomitant doctrinal interpretation as part of the received message. In this way, the role of confessor or of authorized theological interpreters appears unnecessary; and the nun seems not to overextend herself in her function as mere "channel".

Now, it is important to realize that these subversive strategies are always relative. Such mechanisms of discourse appropriation are easily detectible and impugnable. If this margin of freedom was permitted for many writers (not all), it is because in reality they did not project any substantial threat. The ecclesiastical hierarchies had at any time the ability to throw at any of them and their complicit confessors the accusation of trickery, demonic deception or vanity.

Archetypes and Group Identity

Along with the individualizing strategies I have mentioned and those upon which a great part of the recent criticism has conferred such relevance (which I believe to be excessive), in the autobiography written from obedience there is a much more intense—in my judgment—de-individualizing process, which constructs by way of these texts a collective archetype of the contemplative nun, more than a really personal narration. This archetype actually precedes the writing, since the nun has been formed according to hagiographical models which showed

her the virtuous path she was expected to follow. Thus, by a process of mythogeny, she adjusts her conduct to a model which she tries to reproduce within herself by divine assistance. She not only attempts to imitate a literary discourse, but instead models her very life after the archetype of the saint. At the moment of writing, this archetype is reinforced in the same project of proselytizing edification, during which is eliminated anything personal or distinctive. This is done in order to satisfy the horizon of expectations of the genre, which is none other than to serve as an example to new nuns; and then the cycle repeats itself.

In effect, the autobiography written from obedience almost never offers us a writing, but instead, a rewriting which is refined many times over. After oral elaboration in the confessional, the written text is reviewed by the confessor, who requests changes and repetitions at will; successive confessors will order the author to write new versions. In this way she becomes more conscious of what, in her relation, satisfies her spiritual director and what does not. On the other hand, autobiographers normally collect what they have written in the form of relations of favors, accounts of conscience, general confessions, letters, and diaries. A second archetypifying phase escapes from the hands of authors when their autobiographies serve as material for hagiographies, chronicles or funeral sermons, something which scholarship has disqualified as "intellectual appropriation" and "re-creation" of the feminine personality,[35] appropriation and manipulation,[36] "disarticulation" of their original writings,[37] etc. Herpoel concludes that the hagiographers' action underscores their own protagonism and spiritual competence instead of elevating the saintly women they describe,[38] and that the religious authorities "without the least scruple, will take advantage of whichever intimate writings they judge to be most suitable to their purpose of contributing to the transmission of ideology and Christian doctrine".[39] That was the fate of many conventual autobiographies of whose existence we are only aware by way of these filters. If the female

[35] Asunción Lavrin, "La vida femenina como experiencia religiosa: biografía y hagiografía en Hispanoamérica colonial," *Colonial Latin America Review* 2.1–2 (1993): 27–51, at p. 31.

[36] Darcy Donahue, "Writing Lives: Nuns and Confessors as Auto/biographers in Early Modern Spain," *Journal of Hispanic Philology* 13.3 (1989): 230–39, at pp. 231–32.

[37] Poutrin, *Le voile et la plume*, p. 251.

[38] Herpoel, *A la zaga*, p. 69.

[39] Herpoel, *A la zaga*, p. 225.

author is important, these hagiographies give way to others and—the further we get from the original—the archetype becomes more perfect, eliminating the last traces of individuality and direct lived experience. The differences between the original autobiographical texts and the resulting hagiographies are profound and varied, but they always tend to reinforce the orthodoxy and exemplarity of the message.

One evident conclusion of this de-individualization is that the conventual autobiography of the Golden Age does not center around the individual, but instead around the group of which the individual labors to be an archetypical representative. Said another way, it is not the autobiography of the subject, but of the species: a sort of autohagiography used to create and reinforce group identity. From this is derived a political use, such as an attempt to influence society by modifying individual and collective attitudes according to a determined ideology.[40] The key to this group identity resides in the proselytizing strategy which frames these autobiographies. Such identity is not that of Christians in general, but specifically of that community to which the authors pertain: congregations of contemplative nuns. These works are not written by lay believers who have renounced sin and live their faith, but women who have made their profession in cloistered convents to practice mental prayer and other analogous techniques in order to draw near to God. It is a smaller community of persons marked by their exceptional mystical experience. In the 16th century this experience was lived with a feeling that was certainly elitist, but in the 17th century it gave way to a relative popularization (thanks in part to the propaganda of the hagiographical / autobiographical apparatus).

Thus the testimony offered by the autobiography written from obedience is not about the Christian life, but about sanctity. In the opposition between the world and the cloister, these works are calls that ring out from the cloistered nuns to young girls who live in the world, telling them to seek refuge behind the convent's walls. It is this pattern which, as we saw earlier, creates the preferred or model narrative itinerary of a child virgin with signs of sanctity from the cradle (as opposed to that of a repentant sinner). Recognizing this trend serves

[40] Isabelle Poutrin proposes quite reasonably that "la coïncidance qui se noue, durant quelques décennies entre une théologie, une spiritualité et un projet politique mérite d'être soulignée" (*Le voile et la plume*, p. 276).

once again to relativize the space of liberty and authority which the nuns attained with their mystical writing. Aside from individual intentions, the genre itself—and for this reason, it was promoted by the church—exalted conventual life and recruited novices for the religious orders, steering them away from the path of matrimony and the active life. There is no contradiction between this and the strong personality of some authors: the exemplary value of these lives implies a degree of activism and feminine authority. Otherwise, how would Saint Teresa have been an attractive model? The excessive autonomy of some visionary writers supposed a minor dissonance which could be overlooked and then erased entirely by means of hagiographical rewriting.

Because of this, all of these autobiographies appear to represent only one possible vital trajectory, a stereotyped paradigm—today we would call it "politically correct", since this correction was imposed by dominant interests—which betrays the diversity of human experience. Finally it becomes another mechanism for regulation and control of the individual, condemned thus to oppressive similitude with her peers. In this abyss, the abyss of similarity, falls Spanish conventual autobiography. It makes no sense to present this genre as an epic individual effort by women to escape the limits imposed on them by patriarchal power (which could be partly or totally true in certain cases). What we have in reality is a collective effort which was institutionally patronized: that of theocratic power, renewed by the reformed orders and by Tridentine doctrine, to force upon society a concrete program of collective conduct. Spiritual nuns participate in this project; we see this more clearly the further we go in the course of the Counter Reformation. Thus their goals were essentially equal to those of their confessors and superiors, although in minor aspects their desires were opposed. These autobiographies serve to purify conventual customs; they exacerbate a thaumaturgical religiosity based upon prodigy, mortification and the repression of passions; they preach chastity and seek to stifle sin and heresy; and, above all, they found convents and populate them with nuns. The search for feminine voices does not exclude a consideration of what was done with these voices: for many women, these were but siren songs.

Translated by Hilaire Kallendorf

TRADITIONS, LIFE EXPERIENCES AND ORIENTATIONS IN PORTUGUESE MYSTICISM (1515–1630)

José Adriano de Freitas Carvalho

It is necessary to clarify at the very outset what is meant by the word "mysticism" in the context of this article. In the considerations that follow, "mysticism" is understood as the personal "theology" of "contemplative and devout people, given to prayer and contemplation", which "consists more of feeling God within the soul by means of an enlightened, sweet, gentle and loving knowledge, than of knowing how to teach this knowledge by means of words", as in the definition of Friar Sebastião Toscano, O.S.A.[1] This understanding will consequently lead us from the observation of the life experiences of some of the more outstanding individuals or groups, to the indoctrination in some works which, directly or indirectly, aimed to act as a guide in the search for this *modus* of "knowledge" as an "experience" of the love of God.

We shall limit the focus of our article to the period between the end of the 15th century and the beginning of the 17th century; or to be more concrete, between 1515 (the year in which the anonymous medieval *Boosco deleitoso* was printed) and 1630 (the year of the publication of the *Arte de orar* by Diogo Monteiro, S.J.). This does not mean, however, that no previous or later cases or works shall be mentioned—those considered relevant will be alluded to. The present article will only focus on individuals who lived in Portugal, whether of Portuguese nationality or of foreign origin, excluding Portuguese authors who lived and produced their works abroad, whatever their significance.

One must bear in mind, however, that the development of much of the early modern spirituality in Portugal—as in Spain and possibly throughout the rest of Europe—represented first and foremost an

[1] "gente recolhida e devota, dada à oração e contemplação"; "consiste mais em sentir de Deos dentro da alma por hum alumeado conhecimento doce, suave, e amoroso, que em sabêla ensinar por palavras" (Sebastião Toscano, *Mística teologia* [Lisbon, 1568], fols 28v–29r).

elaborate growth of spiritual movements in the context of the history of religions.[2] This process began with the reforms proposed and put into practice by the Franciscans from *c.*1398[3] and the Dominicans in the beginning of the 15th century,[4] taking place in tiny oratories for both males and females. These were more or less immediately integrated into various religious orders, thus often leading to the foundation of convents in which the original spirit and ensuing *modus vivendi* were consecrated, an aspect which was radically championed by Alvaro Pelagio, Bishop of Silves (†1349), in his *Status et planctus ecclesiae*. Although it may be considered only a partial example, the case of some Observant Franciscans must not be forgotten. After many transformations and breaks throughout the 15th century, they saw their ideal of *strictissima paupertas* consecrated in Portugal by the foundation of the Província da Piedade (1500–17) by Pedro de Melgar. Their ideal of poverty received further reinforcement with the foundation of Santa Maria da Arrábida (1542–60),[5] where tiny houses were organized similarly to hermitages in coastal areas, a preference they seem to have inherited from reformers of the 15th century. In the latter province, they followed the readings of the *Floreto de Sant Francisco*, a condensed version of Franciscan sources which was possibly collected in the Iberian Peninsula and which, before being printed in Seville in 1492, circulated in various manuscripts.[6] It was used heavily in the *Crónicas dos frades menores* (1554–56) by Marcos da Silva.[7] Another one of their readings was the *Apocalypsis nova*, attributed

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[2] Zulmira Santos, "Literatura religiosa: época moderna," in Carlos Moreira Azevedo, ed., *Dicionário de história religiosa de Portugal* (Lisbon, 2001), pp. 125–30.

[3] Fidel de Lejarza and Ángel Uribe, *Las reformas en los siglos XIV y XV* (Madrid, 1957).

[4] Beltrán de Heredia, "Los comienzos de la Reforma en Castilla, particularmente en el Convento de San Esteban de Salamanca, y su irradiación a la Provincia de Portugal," in *Miscelanea Beltrán de Heredia*, 4 vols (Salamanca, 1971), 1: 403–26; José S. Silva Dias, *Correntes de sentimento religioso em Portugal (séculos XVI a XVIII)* (Coimbra, 1960), pp. 159–64.

[5] Manuel da Esperança and Fernando da Soledade, *História seráfica na Província de Portugal*, 5 vols (Lisbon, 1656–1721); José de Jesus Maria and António da Piedade, *Crónica da Província de Santa Maria da Arrábida*, 2 vols (Lisbon, 1727–28); Manuel de Monforte, *Crónica da Província da Piedade* (Lisbon, 1751).

[6] José Adriano Carvalho, *Nobres leteras…fermosos volumes…inventários de bibliotecas dos franciscanos observantes em Portugal no século XV* (Porto, 1995), pp. 57–69.

[7] José Adriano Carvalho, "Para a história de um texto e de uma fonte das *Crónicas* de Fr. Marcos de Lisboa: o *Floreto*—ou os *Floretos*?—*de S. Francisco*," in *Frei Marcos de Lisboa: cronista franciscano e Bispo do Porto* (Porto, 2002), pp. 7–57.

to the Portuguese Amadeu da Silva (†1482). Saint Peter of Alcântara, one of the great helpers in the foundation and development of the recently founded province of Arrábida (1541–44; 1548–51),[8] played an important role in the circulation of this book.

At this point, it is important not to forget the reformist and prophetical movements which characterized the first half of the 13th century, nor the small spiritual groups of Franciscan roots, which—led by the Portuguese Vasco Martins, a disciple of the famous Franciscan B. Tomasuccio da Foligno († *c.*1382–1404)—were "in attesa de l'età nuova" (awaiting the new age), at the origin of the peninsular version of the Order of Saint Jerome.[9] This order had serious problems during the reign of the Catholic Monarchs, due to some of its members being accused of judaizing. Furthermore, other groups "living in poverty" such as the followers of the reform led by Ludovico Barbo in San Giorgio in Alga (Venice) became the Portuguese Secular Canons of Saint John the Evangelist (also known as the Order of Lóios).[10] Although organized in a different form, during the first 30 years of the 16th century, the same spirit inspired the reforms of Portuguese Dominicans who were unable to forget the ideals and experiences of Girolamo Savonarola, whose works were read in Portugal despite the suspicion of the Inquisition. They even inspired a poem, *Salutifera crucis triumphus* (1553) by Francisco de Barcelos, O.S.H.

It is in this climate of complex cultural change that the acute feeling of the "end of an era" mingled with the desire for radical reform. Old or new translations of texts by Saint Lorenzo Giustiniani, of the writings of the Desert Fathers and of some works by John Cassian, Saint Augustine, Saint Bernard, and Saint Bonaventure (whether authentic or attributed), along with Ludolph of Saxony (whose *Vita Christi* was a real compilation of Bonaventurian issues), circulated in manuscript

[8] F. Félix Lopes, "Influência de S. Pedro de Alcântara na espiritualidade portuguesa do seu tempo," *Revista portuguesa de história* 6 (1964): 5–69; Rafael Sanz Valdivieso, *Vida y escritos de San Pedro de Alcântara* (Madrid, 1996), pp. 35, 46–54, 372.

[9] Cândido Santos, *Os jerónimos em Portugal: das origens aos fins do século XVII* (Porto, 1980); Josemaría Revuelta, *Los jerónimos: una orden religiosa nacida en Guadalajara* (Guadalajara, 1982); José Adriano Carvalho, "Nas origens dos jerónimos na Península Ibérica: do franciscanismo à ordem de S. Jerónimo—o itinerário de Fr. Vasco de Portugal," *Revista da Faculdade de Letras do Porto, s. Línguas e Literaturas* 1 (1984): 11–131.

[10] Ildefonso Tassi, *Ludovico Barbo (1381–1445)* (Rome, 1952); Pedro Tavares, *Os lóios em terras de Santa Maria* (Santa Maria da Feira, 2008).

form in court, in Franciscan oratories and in convents.[11] The contents of the Cistercian library of Alcobaça—an important center for translation and circulation of medieval texts,[12] both mystical and not—bears witness to this propagation of works in Portugal, as do references in the inventories of some of the smaller libraries in Franciscan oratories. At the same time (and often competing with other movements) the so-called *devotio moderna*—visible in some attempts at monastic reform in Italy from the beginning of the 15th century—not only urged the circulation of the pseudo-Augustinian *Soliloquia* (which existed in Portuguese since *c.*1433) and of the *Imitatio Christi* (of which an incomplete Portuguese translation was published in *c.*1461), but also encouraged the appearance of highly significant works such as the anonymous *Horto do Esposo* and *Boosco deleytoso*. On the one hand, the first work contains three treatises which focus respectively on the name of Jesus, the way to read the Holy Scriptures, and a meditation on the misery of the human condition. It combines a clear anti-intellectualist attitude with the Franciscan traditions of Bernardino of Siena, the knowledge of Saint Jerome, and the clear influence of Seneca and Innocent III with a wide usage of Petrarch's *De vita solitaria* and maybe *De remediis*.[13] On the other hand, the second work—which was greatly appreciated by Queen Leonor of Lancaster (†1525)—marks the beginning of the period that is the focus of this article. It presents a dialogue between Petrarch's *De vita solitaria* (which fills over half the work) and Saint Augustine, Saint Jerome, Saint Bernard, Richard of Saint Victor, and Pius II (*De miseriis curialium*), with *exempla* constituting an extensive call to contemplative life. It is therefore understandable that it was a greatly important work in the libraries of monasteries and that it was even used by later authors, such as Hector Pinto (*Imagem da Vida Cristã*, 1563–72), who were attracted by issues such as the *imitatio Christi*, *amor cellae*, *docta ignorantia* or *relinqua curiosa*.

As can be deducted from our silence, Erasmianism—although it enjoyed a favorable response, especially from the university circles of Coimbra (an expurgated edition of the *Colloquia* appeared there

[11] It circulated in manuscript before being published in 1495 in Portuguese. See Mário Martins, *Estudos de literatura medieval* (Braga, 1956), pp. 105, 131, 191, 201.

[12] Martins, *Estudos*, pp. 159–72, 257–84; José Mattoso, *Religião e cultura na Idade Média portuguesa* (Lisbon, 1982), pp. 511–52.

[13] Martins, *Estudos*, pp. 423–46.

c.1545)[14]—was quickly eradicated by the opposition of various religious sensibilities. Due to the tight control of Inquisitorial repression,[15] Erasmianism did not leave a profound mark on Portuguese spirituality. However, as is evident, this does not mean that, more or less under cover, Erasmian texts were not read: good examples are those of a virtually unknown friar, Jorge of Évora, O.S.H., who was influenced by Erasmus's *Paraclesis* in *De ratione discendi theologiam oratio* (1542?) without confessing to it; and the tragic case of Friar Valentim da Luz, E.S.A. (†1562),[16] who was an enthusiastic and confessed reader of Erasmus, Savonarola and possibly Luther. One must also not forget some coincidences and usages of texts by Erasmus, such as the evident influence in the works of the great eclectic Luis de Granada, O.P.,[17] an avid reader of Savonarola, as well as an admirer and circulator of all mystics whose pastoral activity and abundant literary productions date for the most part from the time he lived in Portugal (1551–82). However, if Erasmianism *strictu sensu* did not enjoy great visibility in the labyrinth of Portuguese spirituality, the same does not apply to related spiritual currents also involved in the reform of interior life—such as, for example, the contemplation and silent prayer of the Franciscans.[18]

For all these reasons, even if the reforming movement of religious orders was not completed—or, in some cases (such as the Benedictines, for example) was not consolidated until after the end of the Council of Trent (1563)—the reform of religious orders and the apparition of new ones (such as the Hieronymites, the Secular Canons of Saint John the Evangelist, the Society of Jesus, etc.) must be borne in mind, because they too represented a proposal for reform, i.e. a deepening of spiritual life for the great majority of Christians. At the time, the closely woven network of convents and houses of prayer, their intense paraenetic activity and literary production, the monitoring of readings

[14] Jorge Osório, "Autour d'un discours humaniste d'un éditeur coïmbrois des *Colloques* d'Erasme," in *Arquivos do Centro Cultural Português* (1977), pp. 41–106.

[15] Jorge Osório, *A oração da fama da universidade (1548)* (Coimbra, 1967); José S. Dias, *A política cultural da época de D. João III* (Coimbra, 1969), pp. 313–410, 943–88; Artur Moreira de Sá, *De re Erasmiana: aspectos do Erasmismo na cultura portuguesa do século XVI* (Paris, 1977), pp. 139–290.

[16] José S. Silva Dias, *Correntes*, pp. 106–07; *O Erasmismo e a Inquisição em Portugal: o processo de Fr. Valentim da Luz* (Coimbra, 1975).

[17] Marcel Bataillon, *Erasmo y España*, 2nd ed. (Mexico City, 1966), pp. 594–604.

[18] Eugenio Asensio, *El Erasmismo y las corrientes espirituales afines: conversos, franciscanos, italianizantes* (Salamanca, 2000), pp. 75–96.

and ways of spiritual life and ways of prayer, and the frequency of sacraments and devotionals represented a framework which could not be transposed. If it could, then it would do so only by causing great controversy. Today, these convents represent an ineludible landmark which—without forgetting the support received from temporal power (whether from the king or from the nobility)—is reflected in historians' accounts.

This general trend toward reform allows for a better understanding of the fact that Saint Bernard (both the authentic and the apocryphal author) was influenced by the Portuguese spirituality of the 16th century. He developed the paths to "recollection" in innumerable Portuguese manuscripts and foreign editions from the great center for this type of writing, the Cistercian convent of Alcobaça. Though he has not yet received the attention he deserves in this respect, the Dominican Friar Bartholomew of the Martyrs, O.P., was a fervent reader of his works. Likewise, Antonio Carvalho Parada would later use them in 1611 to comment on the life of Bartholomeu da Costa. Saint Bonaventure also revealed this continual presence, in both authentic texts and others attributed to him, in complete and summarized editions: the *Vita Christi* (1561) "composed" by Fray Luis de Granada; three treatises (*Da perfeição da vida, Árvore da vida, Forma breve para ensino dos noviços na religiam*, along with the *Abecedario espiritual* taken from *De perfectione ad sorores* and *Lignum vitae* by Marcos da Silva in 1562); *Cursus de passione Christi* (1563); and finally, under the auspices of the Society of Jesus in Évora, a brief anthology formed by *Soliloquium de quatuor mentalibus exercitiis*, *Epistola in XXV memoralia, De informatione novitiorum*, and *Alphabetum parvus* (1576). To these titles must be added the various works which Marcos da Silva included in his second part of *Crónica dos frades menores* (1562), some of which were published in the Iberian Peninsula for the first time: *Epistola… em XXV lembranças*, and a translation of the *Epistola continens viginti quinque memoralia*. Not only is *Crónica dos frades menores* (1562) a chronicle, but also it is a vast anthology of texts by Francis of Assisi and many other Franciscan authors. Various titles can be added to this spiritual bibliography: the *Livro chamado stimulo do amor divino* (1550) by João Mendes de Silva (but which was at the time attributed to the "Seraphic Doctor"); the edition of *Philomena* (1561) by John Pecham, which was also considered to have been written by Saint Bonaventure; the partial publication of the Laudes (both authentic and apocryphal) by Jacopone da Todi, immediately fol-

lowed by his "complete" edition of *Cantos morales, espirituales y contemplativos* (1576), a work which enjoyed the patronage of the same chronicler (as did the *Tractado de como San Francisco buscó y halló a su muy querida sancta pobreza* [1555]); and a translation of *Sacrum commercium*, a highly important work for the definition of all forms of Franciscan observance. In 1602, a notable collection of works by Saint Bonaventure also appeared, with some repetitions: *Alguns tratados em que se contem hũa doctrina muy proveitosa e necessaria a toda a pessoa*, organized by João da Madre de Deus, O.F.M.[19] In addition to these Franciscan texts, another work which prolonged the medievalizing spirituality which the 16th century reformists enjoyed referring to must be remembered: the *Livro chamado espelho da cruz*, i.e. the Portuguese translation of *Speculum crucis* by Domenico Cavalca, O.P. This work—which was first translated at the beginning of the 16th century (possibly from the Seville incunable of 1486) and copied again in the 18th century[20]—was recommended by Jerónimo Nadal to the Jesuits of Coimbra (1554)[21] and was one of the inspirations for the widespread *Trabalhos de Jesus* by Tomé de Jesus, E.S.A.

At this point, it would be useful to remember the presence of some of the so-called "mystics of the North" or Rheno-Flemish mystics (without preoccupying ourselves with a distinction between authentic and attributed works), for whom Portugal represented an authentic peninsular "Noah's Ark", where their works circulated much more freely than in Spain. In Coimbra, in the realm of the reform of the Canons Regular of Santa Cruz, *Espelho de perfeiçam* was published in 1533. It was translated by the reformer himself, Brás of Braga, O.S.H., from the *Directorium aureum contemplativorum* or *Speculum perfectionis* by Heinrich Herp, a work which Franciscans (Bernardino of Laredo, for example, who was well connected at the Portuguese court), Dominicans (e.g. Luis de Granada), Hieronymites (e.g. Brás of Braga) and Carmelites (e.g. Saint John of the Cross)—as well as other authors, both members of the clergy and laymen (such as Gaspar de Leão, Archbishop of Goa, in *Desengano de perdidos* [1573] or Francisco de Sousa

[19] José Adriano Carvalho, "Das edições de St. Bonaventure em Portugal nos séculos XVI, XVII e XVIII: semântica de uma influência na história da espiritualidade portuguesa," *Archivo ibero-americano* 47 (1987): 131–59.

[20] Martins, *Estudos*, pp. 157–58.

[21] José Adriano Carvalho, *Lectura espiritual en la Península Ibérica (siglos XVI–XVII)* (Salamanca, 2007), p. 136.

Tavares in his *Libro de doctrina espiritual* [1564])—referred to or even recommended in the context of the paths of affective devotion. The *Exercitia piissima* and *Instituições* were compiled using the writings of John Tauler and Nicolas Eschio. Along with writings by other mystics (John Ruysbroeck, Seraphin of Fermo), reflected upon by Lawrence Surius, they were widespread in Portugal (and not only during the period which is the focus of this article).[22] This fact is suggested by the various and sometimes multiple editions (1551, 1554, 1555, 1562, 1571) in which Marcos da Silva and Christopher of Abrantes, O.F.M. (†1572) were especially engaged and many others used, such as Tomé de Jesus in his proposal of a meditation on the sufferings of Christ. John Ruysbroeck[23] was not only read by Christopher of Abrantes (who is believed to have translated one or other of his texts) but was, as shall be seen later, the authority cited by some popular spiritual groups whose orthodoxy was considered dubious in the mid-16th century. In any case, the role played by François-Louis de Blois in the (selective) circulation of these authors cannot be forgotten: his works, both in Latin and in vulgar Latin, were a constant source of inspiration and quotation—to the extent that it is via his *Consolatio pusilanimium* that they are often referenced.

The same goes for female medieval mysticism. Indeed, after 1559, with the exception of Saint Catherine of Siena, the editions of Angela of Foligno, Matilda von Hackeborn (although these enjoyed the editorial patronage of Cardinal Cisneros), Gertrude of Helfta, Joan of Orvieto, Margaret of Cortona and Catherine of Genoa stopped being recommended due to the "official" disfavor into which female mysticism had fallen. An obvious example thereof is the censorship of the *Livro da vida admirável e sua sancta doctrina* (1564) by Catherine of Genoa in 1571, which culminated in its prohibition by the Portuguese Index of 1581. The publication of the Latin edition of *Insinuationes divinae pietatis* and of the *Exercitia* by Gertrude of Helfta in 1599 in Madrid also met great difficulties, despite large excisions. These works, translated by Leandro of Granada, O.S.B., were widespread from 1603 on in Castilian, and also became very popular in Portugal. Until then, some took refuge in the pages of Louis de Blois, especially in

[22] Maria de Lourdes Belchior Pontes, *Frei António das Chagas: um homem e um estilo do século XVII* (Lisbon, 1953), pp. 268–69, 357–71.

[23] Silva Dias, *Correntes*, pp. 254–62.

Monile spirituale.[24] Other feminine hagiographies were included in the *Crónica* of Friar Marcos da Silva, which saw over 100 European editions—thus enabling readers to encounter, practically without fail, the "latest news" about the innumerable biographies of medieval female Franciscan mystics.

After this general overview, it is now possible to become more concrete about certain aspects concerning individuals who did not write about their mystical experiences, but which are known of from the accounts of others (especially in the writings of spiritual guides, confessors or companions), and about some circles which felt solidarity towards them in their spiritual practices, as well as certain popular devout groups that the Inquisition did not look upon very kindly. Finally, we shall give our attention to some cases of popular forms of devotion (e.g. the Passion of Christ, the souls of Purgatory) disseminated through art.

We may open the discussion with the case of Dom Leão de Noronha (†1574),[25] a great nobleman related to the royal family of Portugal and the owner of quite a fortune. Without neglecting his nobleman's duties, he and his wife used to help the poor and outcast, such as the thieves, prostitutes and witches of Lisbon during the second half of the 16th century. He had been a novice at a Franciscan monastery of strict observance. He renounced his religious vocation so as to guarantee the succession of his lineage, but served Christ instead through ministry to the poor (just as did many saints of his day). This way of life included harsh penitence, daily confessions, hours dedicated to prayer and to the singing of mass, Eucharistic adoration, and much more. His many works of kindness and his path toward contemplation highlighted the unitive value of charity. This transcendence was crowned by miracles, both during his lifetime and afterwards. The poor represented his way of always "walking in the presence of God" because "in the poor, [he] saw God".[26] He owned a large library which he left in his will to the

[24] José Adriano Carvalho, *Gertrudes de Helfta e Espanha: contribuição para o estudo da história da espiritualidade peninsular nos séculos XVI e XVII* (Porto, 1981), pp. 150–62.

[25] Jorge Cardoso, *Agiológio lusitano*, 4 vols (Lisbon, 1652–1744), 4: 672–83; José Adriano Carvalho, "*Vida, e mercês que Deus fez ao venerável D. Leão de Noronha*: do santo de corte ao santo de família na época moderna em Portugal," *Via Spiritus* 3 (1996): 81–161.

[26] "andar na presença de Deus"; "sempre que os via, via a Deus" (Jerónimo de Melo, *Vida e mercês que Deos fez ao venerável Dom Leão de Noronha*, Ms. 4287, Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa, fols 32r, 23v).

Franciscans of Arrábida. Among his readings, which are not known in detail, one may distinguish the probable presence of Saint Bernard and Saint Bonaventure. These influences would explain the importance that affective prayer had in his daily life, especially in the practice of spirations (ritual breathing) and "ejaculatory" or spontaneous prayer, as well as his love for the singing of mass, both in churches and at home.

All this, accompanied by music, conferred a liturgical dimension, an aspect which another nobleman of his time also appreciated: Saint Francis Borgia. It is not surprising that his biographers portrayed him as a saint at court and that his descendants later made him the family saint. Indeed, his only son, Don Tomás de Noronha (†1588), an "illustrious knight and courtier" who nearly did not inherit his father's fortune because it had practically been spent on the poor, was another living saint in his day. This "perfect Christian" was the squire to the heir to the throne of King John III of Portugal, a member of his embassy at the Council of Trent, a great alms-giver (like his father) who not only prayed in song, hymns and psalms, as his father did, but also made the meditation on the Passion of Christ the center of his contemplation.[27] In this atmosphere of family sanctity, there were two further members worthy of mention: one of Dom Leão de Noronha's sisters, Brites de Castro (†1580),[28] was a Dominican nun who did penance and meditated for long periods of time in front of Christ on the Cross—an icon which, as is well known, moved Teresa de Ávila greatly. Another great nobleman, Don Francisco de Noronha, Count of Linhares (†1605),[29] ambassador to France, who had known how to "make a desert of a palace", was a model of penance and prayer (and consequently, of sanctity). According to the canons of his day, his body was incorruptible, a fact which was proven when it was moved 45 years after his death. Another case to consider is that of the clergyman Bartolomeu da Costa (†1608), canonist and chief treasurer of the Cathedral of Lisbon. His life was full of documented mystical phenomena, and he was profoundly virtuous, a principle which the canons of post-tridentine sanctity had begun to require (this was seen in his demonstration of charity toward the poor). Often, his actions and gestures were similar

[27] Cardoso, *Agiológio*, 1: 148.
[28] Cardoso, *Agiológio*, 1: 430.
[29] Cardoso, *Agiológio*, 3: 668.

to those performed by Leão de Noronha and his son. His disregard for the world, as well as his gentleness, silence and the retired life toward which he always strove, led his biographer, Antonio Carvalho Parada, to comment upon it in the form of a dialogue with a hermit—a living gloss on the texts of Saint Bernard—in *Diálogos sobre a vida e morte do muito religioso sacerdote Bartolomeu da Costa* (1611). His death and funeral were a multitudinous proclamation of *fama sanctitatis*, apparently gained through extraordinary manifestations.

In the world of religious orders, mention must be made of the Jesuit Father Miguel de Sousa (†1582). He was of a very noble family, like many of the first generation of the Society of Jesus in Portugal, and will enable us to mention others who also distinguished themselves in their heroic fulfilment of virtue when performing the *ministeria* of the Society (such as sermons, catechism and assistance to the sick and needy) during a period in which, with the exception of *Exercícios espirituais* and the directives of Ignatius Loyola, the Society of Jesus still had no spiritual literature of its own. The readings recommended to Jesuits by Jerónimo Nadal, Everardo Mercuriano and Claudio Acquaviva are not only a source of information regarding the Institute's preferences, but also a precious source as regards the circulation of spiritual bibliography of the time. The works of medieval mystics, apart from those of Catherine of Siena, were not considered "proper" to the Company's vocation, but were known via François-Louis de Blois, whom Ignatius Loyola held in high esteem. Miguel de Sousa, a disciple of the founder of the Society and great lover of the adoration of the Eucharist—a cult which his Institute fomented during the Counter Reformation—diligently cultivated mental prayer in unison with an active life, which did not exclude harsh physical work. Above all, he practiced virtue to a heroic degree, namely humility, gentleness, prudence, and charity. He was therefore liked by all, whether they were his subjects or not. It was understood that when he died, the sentence "Old virtue, old truth and old goodness have died" was proclaimed. Leão Henriques (†1589) was also of a noble family. He was a tiny man, although his saintly behavior was great. He was an important man in the Society, a man of great contemplation which was transformed into "marvellous feats", such as the gift of bilocation and (according to witnesses' public accounts) the gift of prophecy as regards the destiny of his country and the serious political and social crisis resulting from the disaster of Ksar el-Kebir (1578).

Inácio Martins (†1598) is another man worthy of mention because he dedicated his life to one of the *ministeria* of the Company, the catechism. He was a preacher to the popular but unlucky King Sebastian of Portugal (†1578), and he travelled across half the country preaching intensely. In Lisbon especially, he catechized the *parvuli et rudes*, inventing a thousand ways of attracting the lower classes (youths, blacks, gypsies, prisoners, street vendors, etc.) and making the reading of hagiographic *exempla* more accessible by means of festive gatherings, which rendered his passionate and fascinating pastoral activity very successful. It is not surprising that his *fama sanctitatis*, well alive during his lifetime, led memorialists to consider his death a "calamity" which had befallen Portugal. Later, some of this Jesuit's miracles were officially recorded. Inácio Martins's catechistic activity was greatly influenced by the popular prophet Simão Gomes, the "Saintly Shoemaker", an active and critical figure in some of the popular spiritual circles of his day.[30]

Father Jorge de Tavora (†1599) is a further exemplary case of dedication to the *ministeria* of the Society, i.e. to the poor and ill. As in the previous example, his teachings circulated in songs and plays of a popular nature by students of the University of Coimbra. His written work remains little-known to this day. He dedicated his life to the ill and the poor, and his great charity was revealed during the plague which befell Portugal during those years and led to the isolation of those who were devoted to the sufferers.[31] These are a few examples of the spiritual activity of a religious order during a period in which some of Saint Ignatius Loyola's disciples were still alive and had gone to Portugal. There they formed a very interesting group of Jesuits that have only recently received some of the attention they deserve.[32]

In the wide field of prayer—especially in its most elevated or even mystical manifestations—we can mention certain members of male and female religious orders, as well as some laymen, among hundreds of them, who have documented these happenings or related them to some of the great spiritual leaders of the time who lived in Portugal:

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[30] Cardoso, *Agiológio*, 2: 458, 2: 474, 3: 378; José Adriano Carvalho, *Poesia e hagiografia: vida e morte do P. Inácio Martins, o Santo Mestre da Cartilha* (Porto, 2008).

[31] Cardoso, *Agiológio*, 2: 419.

[32] Eduardo Alonso Romo, "Huellas avilinas en Portugal y en el Oriente Portugués," in *El Maestro Ávila: Actas del Congreso Internacional* (Madrid, 2002), pp. 397–413.

Luis de Granada, Luis de Montoya, and Peter of Alcântara. We should also mention great reformers, such as Saint Teresa, for example. The paths of mystical union with Christ in the Eucharist were experienced by Isabel Gomes, O.P. (†1534). When she took communion, the sacred particle broke apart in the hands of the priest and jumped into her mouth—a "miracle", as her biographers highlighted, that had only previously been attributed to Saint Catherine of Siena. There was also the young ecstatic Joana da Glória, O.P. (†1602) and Luísa dos Anjos, a Franciscan tertiary (†1622) who always meditated on the passion of Christ, and who was elevated to contemplation of the mystery of the Trinity. Mystical Trinitarian symbolism (perhaps reflecting her reading of Henry Suso) was evident in her request for three bread wafers of equal size to be made and offered during the mass she ordered for a liturgical celebration of the Holy Trinity.[33]

In order to confirm the important participation of the Spanish in Portuguese religious reforms of *stricta observantia*, we may recall the case of the Andalusian António de Nebrija, O.F.M. (†1579). Apart from being a rigorous penitent whose *amor paupertatis* was seen in his old stitched-up habit (an ancient and polemical question in which many Franciscan reformers saw themselves involved), he practiced mental contemplative prayer to such an extent that, during the divine mass, the recital of psalms transported him to ecstasy many times. He received special divine favors during his lifetime when his body was surrounded by a halo of light. After his death, a "celestial perfume" (*odor sanctitatis*) emanated from his corpse, which—as is well known—was one of the signs considered to be a manifestation of holiness. Brother Silvestre da Circuncisão, O.C.D. (†1598), like those mentioned before, felt such a deep love for the Eucharist that the simple mention of it made him ecstatic. He began offering spontaneous prayers which prolonged this adoration of God, thereby effectively walking in His presence.[34]

Unfortunately, the exact works which Clemência Baptista, O.S.C. (†1611) enjoyed reading remain unknown, although it is acknowledged that spiritual reading was the means through which she achieved the summits of contemplation in perpetual silence and penance. Above her ecstasies, which she experienced many times when taking communion,

[33] Cardoso, *Agiológio*, 2: 367, 1: 433.
[34] Cardoso, *Agiológio*, 1: 369, 3: 567.

the simple reading of the name of Jesus—which suggests the consideration that medieval devotion continued to receive—was sufficient to transport her out of herself. Mariana do Lado, O.S.C. (†1628), who suffered from a terrible disease, is an example of spiritual union of the profoundest kind. It is said that she reached a mystical union with Christ. The meditation on the Passion is naturally a constant feature of the various paths to prayer during the 17th century. It was revealed in very intense interior forms in the Franciscan Briolanja of Santa Clara, O.S.C. (†1590). She liked to concentrate on the mental pain of Christ, an important theme of the brief treatise *Questi sono li dolori de la mente di Cristo* by Hugo Panciera, Angela of Foligno, Catherine of Bologna, and Ubertino of Casale. She finally received visible signs, such as marks on her forehead, as if she had worn the crown of thorns. She felt as well the pain of the cross on her left shoulder, a result of profound contemplative interiorization of Christ's sufferings.[35] It would be interesting to be able to relate some of the ways of meditating on the Passion of Christ with some forms of devotion (such as the devotion to the Holy Trinity and to the Eucharist, to the Holy Virgin and to some saints) to the relics or altar pieces and other iconographic representations which were present in the monasteries or churches they frequented.

Moving away from this type of ecstatic devotion, one may mention Dr. Inácio Ferreira (†1629), a lawyer renowned for his knowledge and charity towards the poor and prisoners. He later became the head chancellor of Portugal under Philip III. He was a great penitent and went to Eucharistic communion assiduously, in close relationship with observant Franciscans and even more so with the Carmelites of the Teresian Reform. He is said to have wanted to enter this religious order, so it can be assumed that this layman was a fervent reader of the works of the Saint of Ávila, both in private and in the presence of his family, where reading would have been done aloud at the dinner table. He was the father of the famous female poet Bernarda Ferreira of Lacerda, singer of the Carmelite desert of Buçaco. She wrote *Soledades de Buçaco* (1634), which leads us to introduce the presence of Teresa of Jesus in the paths of Portuguese spirituality of the time, via some of the names of her daughters.[36]

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[35] Cardoso, *Agiológio*, 2: 430, 3: 510.
[36] Cardoso, *Agiológio*, 2: 487.

After the foundation of the first convent of Discalced Carmelites, Nossa Senhora dos Remédios in Lisbon, in 1581 (and as a consequence of his great admiration for Saint Teresa), Teotónio of Bragança, Archbishop of Évora, patron of the first edition of *Camino de perfección* (1583), supported the initiative of some Portuguese noblemen in the first female foundation of its reform, the Convent of Santo Alberto in Lisbon in 1585. It is in this convent that the famous María de San José (Salazar), a poet in the mode of the Carmelite saint and fervent defender of the Reformer's orientation, became the victim of her defense of the Teresian heritage and died in Cuerva, in the same year (1603)[37] when she had been forced to leave the Lisbon convent.

Two more companions of the Founding Mother are also well known: Isabel de San Jerónimo (†1618) and Isabel de San Francisco (†1622).[38] An incomplete copy of *Declaración de las canciones de el modo que tiene el alma para llegar a la perfecta unión com Dios qual se pueda en esta vida*, i.e. the *Cántico espiritual* by Saint John of the Cross, has survived from the end of the 16th century, the period during which Jerónimo Gracián, O.C.D.—another great defender of the authentic spirit of the Teresian Reform—was in Lisbon. This book represents a significant remnant of an entire spiritual atmosphere of strong contemplative orientation.

Due to the fact that they are the focus of another part of this book,[39] we shall not concentrate on the writings of Luis de Granada, O.P. (†1589), although the largest part of these were produced in Portugal. Therefore, we shall limit ourselves to mentioning some of his disciples and devout admirers, which will help us understand the widespread effect of his spiritual guidance over the nearly half a century he remained in Portugal.[40] He was an efficient helper to Cardinal Henry of Portugal (†1580), Archbishop of Évora and King of Portugal, for the protection of the first steps of the Society of Jesus on Portuguese soil. Not only was he a widely heard and respected spiritual guide; also he was the biographer of some of his followers.

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[37] María de San José, *Escritos espirituales* (Rome, 1979); Ildefonso Moriones, *El Carmelo Teresiano y sus problemas de memoria histórica* (Victoria, 1997), pp. 236–38.

[38] Cardoso, *Agiológio*, 2: 21, 2: 26.

[39] See the essay in this volume by Freddy Domínguez on "La Monja de Lisboa".

[40] Álvaro Huerga, *Fray Luis de Granada: una vida al servicio de la iglesia* (Madrid, 1988), pp. 96–314; Maria Idalina Rodrigues, *Fray Luis de Granada y la literatura de espiritualidad en Portugal (1554–1632)* (Madrid, 1988).

Luis de Granada firmly believed in the idea that "examples of saintly people move more than saintly words". This was the case of Elvira de Mendonça (†1575), a noble lady who, after the death of her husband, retired among the Dominican nuns of Montemor o Novo; of Melícia Fernandes (†1585), a simple nurse who lived and died during the same century in Setúbal; and of Ana da Conceição, O.P. (†1590), who, at the end of her life, saw herself mystically wounded by a ray of fire which came out of the shrine. There was also the famous Maria da Visitação, O.P. (†1603?), a religious woman of great virtue who was admired by Fray Luis, and who—when the falsity of her stigmata and visions was discovered—was the origin of one of the most beautiful texts by the great Dominican, *Sermón contra los escándalos en las caídas públicas* (1588).[41]

There was also the case of the contemplative Bartholomew of the Martyrs, O.P. (†1590), Archbishop of Braga, who—with Fernando Guerrero and Carlo Borromeo—invoked the example of the early bishops of Christianity as models of post-tridentine prelates. He imitated these models both on the level of his austere life as a Dominican monk (which he continued to lead, even as a prelate, thus going against the ostentation of many of his contemporaries), as well as on the level of the fervent zeal with which he performed his duties as a clergyman. From the point of view which interests us here, the author of his biography, Fray Luis, highlighted his readings of the Church Fathers and the *Teologia mística* of Pseudo-Dionysius, the works of Saint Bonaventure and Saint Bernard (such as an edition of the *Livro da vida e milagres do glorioso S. Bernardo* [1544]), and Jean Gerson, to whom *De contemptu mundi* or *Imitatio Christi* is attributed. The works of these authors were grouped into two large anthologies which were accompanied by some of his comments: *Stimulus pastorum* (1565), a popular book throughout Europe, and *Compendium spiritualis doctrinae* (1582), published under the supervision of Luis de Granada himself.

The importance given to texts by Saint Bernard (or those attributed to him), Saint Bonaventure, Jean Gerson and, without naming him, Ubertino of Casale; the constant usage of "ejaculatory" prayers; the *amor cellae*; and the devotion to Francis of Assisi are worth mentioning, because they provide us with a better understanding of the way

[41] Luis de Granada, *Historia de Sor María de la Visitación y sermón de las caídas públicas* (Barcelona, 1962).

in which this prelate and famous alms-giver (the latter possibly being the aspect of his life which is best remembered today) was a good representative of the diffuse paths to recollection in the Portugal of his day.[42] Two more examples of his disciples may be added to the list of Luis de Granada's biographies: Gabriel of Santiago, O.C. (†1583) and Isabel do Espírito Santo, O.T.S.D. (†1629). The latter, taking into account the extraordinary vogue for reading her works, embodies the variety and surviving effect of the direct, lived influence of Luis de Granada,[43] although we do not always know which of his spiritual orientations were applauded in Lisbon in his time. This uncertainty is demonstrated by the innocuous accusations against him before the Inquisition by Jorge da Silva (†1587), a great nobleman, poet and author of some spiritual works who died in Ksar el-Kebir.

The form of organization for spiritual life, characterized by interiorizing factors and vows of poverty, must be mentioned here. Sometimes this form of life included a strong tendency towards an eremitical lifestyle, which—by prolonging forms of medieval religious life, i.e. confinement and pilgrimage—penitential groups of mendicants (especially Franciscans) persisted in preserving throughout the first half of the modern era. Leaving the older medieval examples aside, which were often absorbed by the mendicant orders (whether voluntarily or not) and stood at the origin of Franciscan or Dominican convents—a movement which may be classified as the first formalization of religious life—we can recall the devout women of Évora, Montemor o Novo, Elvas and Lisbon. These women, even in the middle of the 17th century, persisted in their poor and contemplative lifestyle as Franciscan and Dominican tertiaries. Examples thereof are Isabel de Azevedo (*c.*1503) in Montemor; Isabel Cabral (†1540) in Évora, whose penitential mimesis of Saint Jerome made her famous; Beatriz de Castelo Branco and Leonor da Encarnação, in Lisbon (*c.*1560), who became Poor Clares at a later stage; and Isabel de Jesus (†1612), who lived in a poor oratory of Lisbon, where it was her role to bless the ill.[44] Their Eucharistic fervor, life of poverty, adoration, frequent communion and

[42] Raúl Rolo, *L'évêque de la Réforme Tridentine* (Lisbon, 1965); *Formação e vida intelectual de D. Frei Bartolomeu dos Mártires* (Porto, 1977); José Adriano Carvalho, "O contexto da espiritualidade portuguesa no tempo de Fr. Bartololeu dos Mártires," *Bracara Augusta* 42 (1990): 101–31.

[43] Cardoso, *Agiológio*, 3: 317, 1: 498.

[44] Cardoso, *Agiológio*, 2: 57, 2: 135, 2: 213, 2: 40.

love of spiritual readings lead us to understand how similar their lives were to those of their counterparts who were persecuted by the Inquisition and targeted by satirical literature of the 17th century.[45]

There were innumerable cases of religious individuals who isolated themselves in chapels in the cities, in deserted spots, or in Carmelite deserts for the love of solitude. The hermit's life, which was more accessible to men in its extreme or individual forms, also saw some paradigmatic cases in those days (both Portuguese and foreign), like that of the Hungarian Roberto de Ostendem, who returned to the wood of Carnota (*c.*1525) after having gone on a pilgrimage to Italy and the Holy Land. There he meditated on the *Vitas patrum* of John of Cáceres, a noble priest who had retired to the Serra da Lousã (*c.*1564); the case of the noble Adão Dinis, who hid in a cave outside Nice (*c.*1580–84); that of Gaspar da Piedade, who retired to the cliffs of São João da Pesqueira on the Douro river after having returned from Jerusalem; and, finally, that of the priest Diogo da Madre de Deus (†1630), a former Franciscan who retired to the Furnas of the island of São Miguel (Azores). These are all examples which suggest a map of the Portuguese eremitic movement of the modern era, in which we must remember that there were not only visionaries, but also frauds used for political movements at the end of the 16th century.[46]

To the list of examples which have already been mentioned, one may add further cases which show the extent to which pilgrimage, as an eremitic way of life which was greatly valued in the spirituality of the Middle Ages, still continued to inspire men and women of early modern Portugal to go to the Holy Land. Examples are Friar António, hermit of Serra de Ossa (†1500), for example, and Mécia Pimenta (†1563), who went to Jerusalem three times to live the passion of Christ *in loco*.[47] Others went to sacred locations out of devotion to the pope, to adore the tomb of Saint Peter in Rome. One may ask oneself: is it really necessary to think of the Counter-Reformation dimensions of such "devotion"? Out of devotion also, some went to visit the sepulchre of the founding saint of the religious order to which they belonged. An example of this was Margarida Fernandes

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[45] One example: Jerónimo Baía, "A umas beatas: romance satírico burlesco," in Matias Pereira da Silva, ed., *A fénix renascida*, 5 vols, 2nd ed. (Lisbon, 1746), 1: 337–51.

[46] José Adriano Carvalho, "Eremitismo em Portugal na época moderna: homens e imagens," *Via Spiritus* 9 (2002): 83–145.

[47] Cardoso, *Agiológio*, 3: 651, 1: 12.

(†1540), who went to the shrine of Saint Dominic in Bologna.[48] If it did not stand outside the period of time on which we are focusing in the present article, one would also have to dwell upon the case of Ana da Conceição (†1646), the famous pilgrim to Jerusalem and Rome.[49]

In accordance with some suggestions put forward already, it would be convenient to ask whether for certain groups of predominantly popular character, in a more or less informal manner, some names or spiritual orientations mentioned above merged their identities. It would also be valuable to ask whether some devout groups, uniting high-ranking figures of religious life and politics of the day, contributed to the atmosphere of spiritual life at the end of the second half of the 16th century in Portugal. They undoubtedly did this to some extent, especially in the capital.

Members of the former group frequented the church of São Domingos (Saint Dominic), next to the seat of the Inquisition or, just a little further out, the neighborhood of Graça. Alternatively, they met at the homes of members in the Bairro Alto or in the shade of the Convent of Santos, and were taken under the wing of or even led by some Hermits of Saint Augustine, by rigorous Franciscans from Arrábida and by some Jesuits.[50] Outside Lisbon, we know that not only did they exist in Almada (where they met in the house of Francisco de Sousa Tavares, a nobleman and distinguished spiritual author), but also they existed in Montijo and Alhos Vedros.[51] However, at the moment there are insufficient studies and documentation to permit an analysis of this issue, which is why—for now—it is only possible to suggest that the map of its geographical spread was situated mainly around Lisbon.

Spiritual centers appearing much later are recognized (i.e. during the second half of the 17th century and even in the 18th). The latter were very active and were frequented by devout men and women. This leads us to suspect that in other areas (some as far as Viseu and Bragança), spiritual groups of a similar character also existed, whatever their variants.[52] It is important, however, not to forget that—despite their predominantly popular character—people of a higher social

[48] Cardoso, *Agiológio*, 1: 159.
[49] Cardoso, *Agiológio*, 3: 447.
[50] Silva Dias, *Correntes*, pp. 377–90.
[51] Silva Dias, *Correntes*, pp. 391–402.
[52] Pedro Tavares, "Caminhos e invenções de santidade feminina nos séculos XVII e XVIII (alguns dados, problemas e sugestões)," *Via Spiritus* 3 (1996): 163–215.

status or of great moral authority also frequented or supported these groups, such as the afore-mentioned Francisco de Sousa Tavares and his wife, Maria da Silva; or Francisco de Monzón, the author of *Espejo del príncipe cristiano* (1544) and *Norte de idiotas* (1563); or the Duke of Aveiro's sisters, for instance. Although this was not systematic, these groups were often led or guided by men of the status of Gonçalo Vaz, S.J.; Francisco da Porciúncula, O.F.M.; Tomé de Portalegre, O.F.M. (an Arrabidian who was greatly admired by Luis de Granada); or Tomé de Jesus, E.S.A. Sometimes spiritual authorities such as the famous Inácio Martins, S.J. were consulted.

Despite the suspicions of the Inquisition about many of them, their voluntary links to members of the clergy (in other words, to recognized authority) distinguished these groups from their Spanish peers, whatever their affinities. But these were links which the Inquisitors, who had knowledge of the Spanish edict of 1525 against the *alumbrados* ("illuminated ones"), greatly exaggerated, sometimes even forgetting that the members of these groups normally valued above all else certain ascetic and penitential practices. Independently of individual variants, certain themes had universal validity: the interiorization of religious life and the consequent focus on mental prayer; consideration of oral prayer and meditation on the humanity of Christ as exercises proper to beginners on mystical paths; a reduction in the importance given to religious formulae and formalism; frequent communion, without always necessarily having to confess beforehand; the difficulty of abandoning states of high contemplation in order to reach out to the needs of others; and so on, excepting—it is important to note—any allusion to the impeccability of those who were perfect. All this derives from the already-mentioned readings of the Bible, Catherine of Siena and Catherine of Genoa; of the so-called "mystics of the North" such as John Tauler, Heinrich Herp and John Ruysbroeck—available in both Portuguese and Castilian, as noted above; of François-Louis de Blois; and of the *Tercer abecedario* by Francisco de Osuna,[53] although some of its points of doctrine can be interpreted as mere developments of sentences pronounced in the *Imitatio Christi* or by Saint Bernard, masters of contemplation (a perspective which has not been granted the attention it deserves). The overview would be more complete if we

[53] Silva Dias, *Correntes*, pp. 372–79.

added some cases of visionaries and pseudo-mystical manifestations, which seem to be what really impressed contemporaries the most.

In order to understand the paths and orientations of Portuguese spirituality in early modern times, it is relevant to note the solidarity which sometimes existed between important spiritual masters and some of the noblemen and women of their eras. For example, Luis de Granada admired and supported the teaching of catechism by Jesuits, especially by Inácio Martins, S.J. (†1598) to children, the poor and outcast on the streets of Lisbon. He was an admirer and protector of Simão Gomes, shoemaker, prophet and critic of some of the members of popular spiritual groups. On the other hand, the great Inácio Martins was given support by Miguel de Moura (†1599), a powerful Secretary of State and one of the governors of Portugal during the reign of Philip II, the builder of a convent for the Poor Clares and (like the king) a fervent collector of relics.[54] He was in close relationship with Father Agostinho da Trindade, C.S.S.J.E. (†1603), a humble counsellor to kings and princes, and—with the famous Father António da Conceição, of the same order (†1602)[55]—thaumaturge and prophet for his times during Portugal's hours of tribulation. In addition, these men were closely related to the Dukes of Aveiro, pious noblemen whose family (as specified above) protected a devout group united in the shadow of the Monastery of Santos in Lisbon. All in all, the names and social status of these individuals suggest both the importance of the extension of these spiritual groups' activity as well as the adhesion of men of all classes to the said groups, as well as their extreme vulnerability in the face of internal rivalries and suspicions of heterodoxy.

Some of the allusions we have already made allow for the introduction now with greater precision of a subject which generally receives little attention within the frame of histories of spirituality in Portugal: the prophetic currents which, in a more or less embryonic form—but with increasing visibility from the second half of the 15th century—crossed the country before finally becoming an instrument of political resistance to the reign of King Philip in the 17th century. Even later, they became a simple method of propaganda in favor of the sovereigns in power or of opposition to some of the government's orientations.

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[54] Miguel de Moura was also an admirer of Simão Gomes. See Francisco de Sales Loureiro, *Miguel de Moura (1538–1599): Secretário de Estado e Governador de Portugal* (Lourenço Marques [Maputo, Mozambique], 1974).

[55] Cardoso, *Agiológio*, 3: 402, 2: 475.

Independently of the orientations of many politico-religious prophecies mentioned in the chronicles of the first princes of the dynasty of Avis (John I, Duarte, Afonso V),[56] it is important to highlight the prophetic movements which—integrated by Franciscan Tertiaries led by Tomasuccio da Foligno (a disciple mentioned above) and Friar Vasco Martins—entered from Italy at the end of the 14th century and spread across the Iberian Peninsula in the hope of locating the place near Toledo where, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, the "Third Age" would begin. This so-called "Third Age" was the last one of the history of the world, according to Joachim of Fiore. This "attesa della fine" (waiting for the end)[57] which, by means of various avatars, ended both in the manifestation of different groups of eremitic *viri spirituales* of Franciscan roots (e.g. Salceda, Córdova) and in the foundation of an *ordo novus* (that of Saint Jerome), received—as has already been suggested—a strong impulse with the "opening" and circulation of the text of the very famous *Apocalypsis nova* (whether altered or not is irrelevant here) by the Portuguese Amadeu da Silva (†1482), better known as Beato Amadeu.[58] This text accompanied Columbus, the first Franciscan missionaries to Mexico, and Saint Peter of Alcântara. Some Franciscans of the Portuguese province of Arrábida were involved in its circulation in Portugal, which is why it is not surprising that John III of Portugal also showed interest in it after having received a copy of it from Rome, an exemplar whose location is unknown to us today.[59]

Around 1556, Marcos da Silva—having selected and translated some pages of the famous five-book *Arbor vitae crucifixae* by Ubertino of Casale—summarized the hopes of a *renovatio mundi* in a *renovatio ordo Beati Francisci* which was in the process of being undertaken. This reform movement was consecrated in 1517.[60] Later, Gaspar de Leão, Archbishop of Goa, in *Desengano de perdidos* (1573), transposed

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[56] Margarida Ventura, *O Messias de Lisboa: um estudo de mitologia política (1383–1415)* (Lisbon, 1992).

[57] Roberto Rusconi, *L'attesa della fine: crisi della società, profezia ed apocalisse in Italia al tempo del grande scisma d'Occidente (1378–1417)* (Rome, 1979).

[58] José Adriano Carvalho, "Profetizar e conquistar dos fins do século XIV aos meados do século XVI: introdução a um projecto," *Revista de história* 11 (1991): 65–93.

[59] José Adriano Carvalho, "A difusão da *Apocalysis Nova* atribuída ao Beato Amadeu da Silva no contexto cultural português da primeira metade do século XVII," *Revista da Faculdade de Letras do Porto, s. Línguas e Literaturas* 19 (2002): 5–40.

[60] José Adriano Carvalho, "Achegas ao estudo da influência da *Arbor vitae crucifixae* de Ubertino da Casale e da *Apocalypsis Nova* em Portugal no século XVI," *Via Spiritus* 1 (1994): 55–109.

such hopes to the future joint action of King Sebastian of Portugal and of Pope Pius V for the establishment of the eschatological empire of Christ. This was followed by Braz Viegas, S.J., who wrote *Commentarii exegetici in Apocalypsim* (1601), a work which enjoyed widespread European resonance and in which he expressed his faith that the *viri spirituales* who formed the Society of Jesus would lead to the same *renovatio*.[61]

At the same time as this wave of universal spiritual renovation, some voices were heard in Portugal during the second half of the 16th century which preached the urgency of conversion in biblical tones at the same time as they prophesied imminent divine punishments. An example is that of Simão Gomes (†1576), already mentioned above, the humble artisan known as the "Saintly Shoemaker", a vigilant frequenter of orthodoxy in Lisbon's devout circles, closely linked to the Society of Jesus. His biography was written by a Jesuit, Manuel da Veiga, in 1625. He was protected by Cardinal Henry, the future king of Portugal (1578–1580), who—in a *Lamentação* (Lamentation) in the style of Jeremiah—mourned the "destruction" of Lisbon, i.e. Portugal. He prophesied that if lifestyles and habits were not modified, then King Sebastian's imperial plans for the conquest of North Africa would fail—plans which, as is known now, ended in the defeat of the Portuguese army and the death of the King in Ksar el-Kebir (1578), with dramatic social and political consequences.[62]

However, within the cultural frame of that time, there were many prophecies about the King and his projects, such as for example those of Father Diogo Cavaleiro (†1580), nephew of the other prophet, and Friar Afonso Cavaleiro, O.F.M., bishop of Sardinia (*c.*1522). A further example is that of Friar Cosme, a humble Cistercian (†*c.*1600)[63] who, upon an order from his superior, is said to have seen the blood of "Portuguese martyrs […] dressed in white clothing" running "in the African fields", thus suggesting the profound feeling of distress which overcame the Portuguese after 1578 and the paths which were tentatively taken in order to avoid it (or, afterwards, to overcome it

[61] João Carlos Serafim, *D. João de Castro, "O Sebastianista": meandros de vida e razões de obra*, 3 vols (Porto, 2004), 1: 574.

[62] José Adriano Carvalho, "Um profeta de corte na corte: o caso (1562–1576) de Simão Gomes, o Sapateiro Santo (1516–1576)," in *Actas do Colóquio "Espiritualidade e corte em Portugal nos séculos XVI–XVIII"* (Oporto, 1993), pp. 233–60.

[63] Cardoso, *Agiológio*, 3: 135, 2: 443.

with spiritual touches of a crusading type, not much different from the mentality of the king who was really trying to rival the battle of Lepanto). Let us leave aside the little-known cases of prophecies attributed to the Jesuits Luís Gonçalves da Câmara and Leão Henriques, who echoed Father Inácio Martins, S.J. from the pulpit.[64] It is important to mention the fame enjoyed by Father António da Conceição, C.S.S.J.E. (†1603) during the attacks of the British fleets on Lisbon and other Portuguese ports involved in the conflict between Elizabeth I and Philip II, times during which his prophet's voice had a calming effect, due to his prediction of the defeat of the British.[65]

It is precisely in this context that the decline of the fame of the celebrated "nun of Lisbon", Maria da Visitação, O.P., should be seen. She was undeniably virtuous and penitent, but—like others in her day—was stamped as a false visionary and stigmatized. The source of her perdition was not so much the wars within her Convent of the Anunciada and her false stigmata, but her political involvement against Philip II after the disaster of the "Invincible", the Armada which she herself had blessed, just as she had blessed the standards of some Portuguese captains. Although this is a case of a false visionary, it is relevant in the sense that it encloses a model of sanctity which the whole of Europe accepted in admiration. It was followed by a harsh lesson which Luis de Granada humbly presented as a variation of a political visionary and prophetess at the time of her downfall and Inquisitorial trial. Nationalist resistance against the House of Habsburg then set in after 1580. This took expression in the famous and widespread *Trovas* by Gonçalo Anes Bandarra, a shoemaker from the region of Beira (Trancoso), which were used in the messianism of many New Christians. Also from 1598 on, erudite glosses and other prophetic literature were produced. These must be seen as another example of Joachim of Fiore's "spiritual posterity", who set their hopes on the apparition of an emperor who would be the King of Portugal, who would have reappeared and been restored to his throne.[66]

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[64] José Adriano Carvalho, "Um pregador em tempos de guerra: Inácio Martins, SJ. Seis sermões contra os ingleses (1588–1596) e cinco cartas de viagem por Europa," in *A Companhia de Jesus na Península Ibérica nos séculos XVI e XVII: espiritualidade e cultura*, 2 vols (Porto, 2005), 1: 278–79.

[65] José Adriano Carvalho, "Um *beato vivo*: o P. António da Conceição, CSSJE, conselheiro e profeta no tempo de Filipe II," *Via Spiritus* 5 (1998): 13–51.

[66] José Adriano Carvalho, "Joachim de Flore au Portugal: XIIIème–XVIème siècles. Un itinéraire possible," in *Il profetismo gioachimita tra Quattrocento e Cinquecento* (Genova, 1991), pp. 415–32; Serafim, *D. João de Castro*, 1: 530.

As is well known, the greater part (if not the totality) of the more important works by Luis de Granada date from the years during which he lived in Portugal (1550–†88). Some of those works, written in vulgar Latin, are worthy of mention because they can be considered pillars of Portuguese literary production. They center on prayer as a medium of union with God. Even in cases in which the *ars orandi* might be said to prevail, they are special examples of devotional *lectio*.

Between 1563 and 1572, Heitor Pinto, O.S.H., published his *Imagem da vida Cristã*, which was formed by 11 highly erudite dialogues "in Plato's style"[67] (erudition as the foundation of humility, in the sequence of Saint Jerome).[68] Beginning with the examination of "true philosophy" ("Christ is true wisdom") and closing with the judgement on "true and false goods"—beauty, richness, voluntary poverty, science, nobility, etc.—he ponders that to go up the "high mount of divine vision", or "mount of glory", it is necessary to "leave all our idols, which are the things whereby we pit our happiness against the will of God".[69] The other dialogues focus on meditation about "religion", "justice", "tribulation", "solitude", "death", "causes" (the reasons of many natural and biblical symbols), "tranquillity of life", "discreet ignorance" and "true friendship".[70] Referring to the Church Fathers; to Saint Bernard ("appreciate knowledge in order to know how to love");[71] to *Imitatio Christi* ("before the virtues which you would deliver"); to Petrarch (*pietas est sapientia*); and to the Greek and Latin classics (not always first-hand, naturally), it sets an itinerary in which ascetic renunciation is put to the service of monastic discretion to reach a unifying contemplation with God. It is possible to reconstitute this mystical itinerary by interpreting his expressions in one of his texts:

> *Leaving the world and the body…, alienated from the exterior which distracts…, as if there were no body…, free of the dark night of terrestrial*

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[67] "à maneira de Platão" (Edward Glaser, introduction to his edition of the old Castilian version [Zaragoza, 1571] of the first part of *Imagen de la vida cristiana* [Barcelona, 1967], pp. 26–163).

[68] "Erudição e espiritualidade no século XVI: a propósito da *Imagem da Vida Cristã* de Fr. Heitor Pinto," in *Actas do Primeiro Simpósio sobre o Humanismo Português, 1500–1600* (Lisbon, 1988), pp. 653–81.

[69] "Cristo é a sapiência verdadeira"; "deixar todos os nossos ídolos, que são as cousas em que contra a divina vontade pomos a nossa felicidade" (Heitor Pinto, *Imagem da vida christam*, 2 vols [Lisbon, 1843], 1: 69, 320).

[70] "tranquilidade da vida"; "discreta ignorância"; "verdadeira amizade". These phrases refer to the titles of the dialogues.

[71] "estimar o saber para saber amar" (Pinto, *Imagem*, 2: 224, 714).

> *lowness…, with the greatest part of understanding…, united with oneself…, in one's interior…, [the soul] rises as an eagle from the nest…, goes up so high…that the clouds are surpassed…, it goes into the open sky…, penetrates great secrets, and arrives to the battlements of Heaven.*[72]

Is it a great surprise that this work, profoundly centered on Christ and written by a Christian humanist, should have spread around Europe in 80 editions, maybe even more?[73]

At this point, we come to the *Livro de doctrina espiritual* (1564) by Francisco de Sousa Tavares, a Portuguese nobleman who, with his wife (as we have already seen) was an important figure in some spiritual circles of Lisbon. It is an extremely rare book, composed of a series of booklets on prayer in which authorities—such as the Church Fathers, Saint Bonaventure, Heinrich Herp, John Tauler, François-Louis de Blois, Catherine of Siena, Angela of Foligno, and Catherine of Genoa—underlie a great amount of knowledge, which is also the result of personal experience. Tavares was another admirer and reader of Luis de Granada.[74] His commentary on *Pater noster*, the central core of the work, enables him not only to surpass the pressing questions of the time about vocal and mental prayer, and to defend prayer as the basis of any interior reform, but also to stress how all types of prayer are nothing but a gloss of the Lord's Prayer. Praying is done *in free will and with feeling from the heart*, i.e. *looking for God* with *desire and love and renouncement, shredding and annihilating from within one's own will.* In this sense, prayer is a path that leads to a union with God by means of transformation, and it will always be fundamentally an *act of love* in which God *meets the soul.* The language of this work is derived directly or indirectly from Pseudo-Dionysius. *The most learnèd ignorance and an intimate union of love* is to be recognized in God, because the *image of God* is in the *apex of the spirit, the foundation and essence of the soul.* Therefore, we must search for God within ourselves, *negatively*, thus renouncing both free will and

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[72] José Adriano Carvalho, "Le christianisme humaniste dans les *Dialogues* de Fr. Heitor Pinto," in *L'humanisme portugais et l'Europe* (Lisbon, 1984), pp. 161–77; "A *ars orandi* em Fr. Heitor Pinto e as raízes culturais da *Imagem da Vida Cristã*," *Humanística e teologia* 5 (1984): 291–318.

[73] Francisco Leite de Faria, "O maior êxito editorial no século XVI em Portugal: a *Imagem da Vida Cristã* por Frei Heitor Pinto," *Revista da Biblioteca Nacional* second series 2 (1987): 83–110.

[74] Mário Martins, "A obra mística de Francisco de Sousa Tavares," *Brotéria* 40 (1945): 533–43.

all figures and images, i.e. *silencing both interior and exterior senses*. In a tradition strengthened by the mystics of the North, Tavares heartily recommends spirations (ritual breathing) as an exercise to reach this *apex of the spirit* with vigor and ease, where *union is transformation*. And it is in this *summit of love* that the fields of contemplation are already present, a place where *the utmost peace and the utmost silence and the union of spirit and eternal silence* reign.[75]

Let us now focus on the *Trabalhos de Jesus* (1603–09) by Tomé de Jesus, E.S.A., another European printing success: nearly 200 editions had been published by the end of the 19th century.[76] The work was finished before 1581, shortly before the author's death (†1582) in a prison in North Africa, where he was incarcerated as a consequence of Ksar el-Kebir. The work barely reflects on those hard times, the harshness of a prisoner's work and the feeling of abandonment by his family and fellows. Surely as a result of the memories of well-assimilated former readings, we can see the following in the pages of the book: Saint Augustine (*Confissões*, the genuine writings and the attributed *Soliloquia*); Saint Bonaventure (*Lignum vitae*, *De triplici via*), which, along with the *Devotíssima exercitia* by Pseudo-Tauler, provided him with both affection and painful details (both true and piously verisimilar) of the sufferings of Christ;[77] the *Exercitia* by Ignatius Loyola; Luis de Granada, with whom he had lived; and even a verse of the *Coplas* by Jorge Manrique.

The *Trabalhos de Jesus* definitely situates itself within the domains of asceticism and is frequently written in an elaborately wordy style, focusing on the analysis of the contradictions between the self and the sinner, a dramatic scrutiny of the movements of the heart, and on the harshness of the sinner (which can only be mellowed by Christ). It also dwells on the preaching of renunciation, the annihilation of free will and the total delivery of oneself to Christ in the practice of virtue, which traditionally represented the preparation of the soul aspiring to contemplation. The primordial and final aim of this entire program of ascetic struggle is the imitation of Christ, an imitation which is filled

[75] José Adriano Carvalho, "Francisco de Sousa Tavares," in Maria de Lourdes Belchior, ed., *Antologia de espirituais portugueses* (Lisbon, 1994), pp. 207–32.

[76] Francisco Leite de Faria, "Difusão extraordinária do livro de Frei Tomé de Jesus," *Anais da Academia Portuguesa de História* second series 28 (1982): 165–232.

[77] Mário Martins, "O Pseudo-Tauler e Frei Tomé de Jesus," *Brotéria* 42 (1946): 231–50.

with the memory of vivid and pious details: from the pains He suffered in his mother's womb to the poor family home in Nazareth (which was supported by Joseph's work and Mary's sewing), and even Jesus's physical work during his first 30 years; the coins for which Jesus was betrayed; the nature, fabrication and shape of the crown of thorns; the number of lashes; the face of Christ when they slapped Him; the insane men who accompanied Him through Jerusalem; the fall of the Virgin at the Cross (Tomé de Jesus also portrays the heroic version), etc. The work wishes to make the happenings visible and intense for each reader, by means of a great amount of detail and the usage of parallel allegories. The suffering Christ—Whose heart, the center of charity, is always close to man—is before all the *mirror* in which every Christian must see himself, even knowing that it does not only depend on himself to reach such an identification. That is why the pleas to Christ to help and provide transforming grace are heard throughout the work, sometimes dramatically and in a grieving tone.[78] It was surely this pious and painful dimension, more than the moralistic one, which touched its readers. It was a means to reach peace, a form of criticism of the habits and vanities of lords of this world, and invectives against Jews and worldly religious men which determined the great circulation of this book. Unamuno considered the work "all lyrical effusions and vivid ejaculations, a long hymn to pain—often diffuse and emphatic, and of a more Spanish emphasis than a Portuguese one."[79]

We must now mention other men and circumstances which deserve our attention: Sebastião Toscano, E.S.A., author of *Mística teologia* (1568), who was greatly influenced by Alonso de Orozco, and who teaches that Christ is a "real path to Heaven" through whom the summit of "contemplation and wonder" may be reached;[80] the noble Manuel of Portugal, author of a long mystical quest through allegorical deserts (prose and verse in Castilian and Portuguese) and which,

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[78] José Adriano Carvalho, "Tomé de Jesus," in Belchior, *Antologia de espirituais portugueses*, pp. 353–95.

[79] "todo efusiones líricas y encendidas jaculatórias, un largo himno—muchas veces difuso y enfático, y de un énfasis más español que portugués—al dolor" (Miguel de Unamuno, *Por tierras de Portugal y de España*, 5th ed. [Madrid, 1960], p. 11).

[80] "verdadeiro caminho do céu"; "contemplação e espanto" (Mário Martins, "Da vida e da obra de Frei Sebastião Toscano," *Brotéria* 62 [1956]: 46–55); "A *Mística Teologia* de Frei Sebastião Toscano," *Biblos* 32 (1956): 401–28; Armando de Jesus Marques, "Sebastião Toscano," in Belchior, *Antologia*, pp. 233–54.

along with his *Tratado breve da oração*, forms his *Obras* (1605);[81] Agostinho da Cruz, O.F.M., whose profound and serenely Christ-centered poetry was only published in 1771, and which focuses on the delicate and careful contemplation of the splendors of nature (sea and mountains) surrounding his Convent of Arrábida in contemplation of the Creator.[82]

As was said at the outset, we shall end with the *Arte de orar* (1630), a ponderous and complex work by Diogo Monteiro, S.J., which aims to be a vast historical and spiritual commentary of the *Exercícios espirituais* by Ignatius Loyola. This work is over 1,000 pages long and is therefore impossible to summarize completely. In it we find descriptions of the experience of giving, for 30 years, these *Exercícios* and the theological and spiritual readings which underlie it. Its 29 chapters, which the author benevolently describes as "brief", are crowned by a *Método de fazer confissão dos pecados* in the form of dialogues which develop suggestions about the subject matter throughout the *Arte de orar*. It is a largely technical work and of a practically scholastic character due to its definitions, divisions, subdivisions and enumerations (Monteiro's masters here are Thomas Aquinas and Francisco Suárez). It offers texts of great literary beauty in the midst of a vast profusion of authorities and innumerable *exempla*. These texts are supposed to introduce prayer by means of effects, similarities, counterparts, intrinsic good and evil, and dialogues according to the hours of the day. They are meant to serve as a *lectio* in meditation, such as for example the ones dedicated to the effects of the love of God and to godly love manifested in the creation. Despite the "scholastic" structure applied to the comments on the *Exercícios* by Ignatius, the work by Diogo Monteiro strives for clear expression (without excluding affective language, and a style influenced by knightly and courtly idiom). It must be seen especially as an *officina* which wanted not only to provide erudition about the *ars orandi*, but also to act as a supporting text for the spiritual life of its readers, whether they be other masters of the

[81] Mário Martins, "A poesia mística de D. Manuel de Portugal," *Revista da Universidade de Coimbra* 19 (1960): 420–44; Maria Lucília Pires, "D. Manuel de Portugal," in Belchior, *Antologia*, pp. 419–37.

[82] Daniel Faria, *A vida e conversão de Frei Agostinho: entre a aprendizagem e o ensino da cruz* (Lisbon, 1999).

Exercícios or simply devout individuals, such as the Countess of São João, to whom the book was dedicated.[83]

Let us close this article about traditions, lifestyles and orientations with a brief allusion to a popular painter, Luís Álvares de Andrade (†1631). Educated by Dominicans, including Luis de Granada, this "Saintly Painter"—who was also the author of *Advertências espirituaes* (1625)—was famous for the immense popularity of his panels, which aimed to awaken devotion to the souls of Purgatory throughout the streets and town squares. By making it more accessible and visible, he collaborated actively in the intensification of distinctive traits of the post-Tridentine pastoral conquest in Portugal.[84] These panels and altars have survived the centuries, and sometimes these pictorial representations are extended to other devotions (see Figures 1 and 2). They are still known today as *Alminhas*.[85] Unamuno, who confessed to "not believing in that Purgatory", still admired these popular manifestations and believed that they were proof of "the profound feeling of religious solidarity between the living and the dead".[86] Is that not a form of solidarity similar to the one that we have relived throughout these pages?

Translated by Anna Porter[87]

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[83] António Canavarro, *O. P. Diogo Monteiro (1561–1634) e a sua "Arte de orar"* (Braga, 1992).

[84] Romeo de Maio, *Pittura e Controriforma a Napoli* (Bari, 1983), pp. 177–79.

[85] Flávio Gonçalves, "Os painéis do Purgatório e as origens das *Alminhas* populares," *Boletim da Biblioteca Pública Municipal de Matosinhos* 6 (1959): 71–107.

[86] "no [creer] en tal Purgatorio"; "el hondo sentido de la solidariedad religiosa entre vivos y muertos" (Unamuno, *Por tierras*, pp. 44–45).

[87] The translation of this essay was subsidized by the Centro Interuniversitário de Historia da Espiritualidade, under whose auspices this research was also conducted.



1. Chapel of the Souls (Nicho das Almas), Igreja Matriz de Gondar (Vila Nova de Cerveira, Portugal) (Photo: María Gabriela Oliveira)



2. Confraternity painting of Saint Michael the Archangel and Souls (Igreja Sandim, Vila Nova de Gaia, Portugal) (Photo: María Gabriela Oliveira)

NEW WORLD COLONIAL FRANCISCAN MYSTICAL PRACTICE

Francisco Morales

Mystical practice arrived to the New World earlier than one might have expected. I refer here not only to the monastic life practiced by the religious orders—Franciscans, Dominicans and Augustinians—who by the 1530s were well established in the Americas. Instead, I refer to the devotional, ascetic and mystical practices introduced by these orders not only in the Spanish communities (a well-studied topic) but in the converted native communities. This theme deserves attention since it provides an opportunity to approach the study of intercultural dialogue within a field almost unexplored up to now. This is the subject of this chapter: namely, to explore the Franciscan contribution to a dialogue on ascetic and mystical practices with the 16th-century Nahuas of central Mexico. The participants in this dialogue were singular representatives of two strong currents of religious practice: medieval and Mesoamerican. The well known 16th-century Franciscan ethnographer, Bernardino de Sahagún, writing on the ancient Mexicans, says:

> In regard to the religion and worship of their gods I do not believe that in the world there have been idolaters more worshipful toward their gods, nor so submissive to them, than these [peoples] of this New Spain; neither the Jews nor any other nation had such a heavy yoke and with so many ceremonies as this native people had for so many years, as may be seen in this work.[1]

The unavoidable question is: was it possible that two strong religious systems (the medieval Christian Franciscan and the Mesoamerican Nahua), with such different concepts about the Divinity, could open

[1] "En lo que toca a la religión y cultura de sus dioses no creo ha habido en el mundo idólatras más reverenciadores de sus dioses, ni tan a su costa, como éstos de esta Nueva España; ni los judíos, ni ninguna otra nación tuvo yugo tan pesado y de tantas ceremonias como le han tomado estos naturales por espacio de muchos años, como parece por esta obra" (Bernardino de Sahagún, Prologue to *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España* [Mexico, 2000], 1: 64). All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

a dialogue in a matter so delimited by religious views as the mystic's? Some scholars maintain that this dialogue was impossible.[2] My opinion is that, reading the 16th-century Franciscan literature, both Spanish and Nahua, one will be able to find enough evidence to maintain that the Franciscans and Nahuas were open to a religious intercultural dialogue which permitted them an exchange of religious symbols, concepts and practices. The purpose of this dialogue was to motivate the Franciscans to draw up different projects to introduce the Nahua communities into the practice of Franciscan mysticism. The result was a religious venture which might be considered one of the most daring attempts in western Christianity to approach the Other's culture. As I mentioned, my principal sources will be the well-known 16th-century Franciscan literature, most of it, unfortunately, still waiting for English translation.[3] I will juxtapose with this literature various unpublished materials, most of them from the Archivo General de Indias in Seville (Spain). My hope is that this chapter will open the opportunity for further research in a field so important for intercultural dialogue.

Francis of Assisi and Medieval Mysticism

It would be impossible to deal with Franciscan mystical practice in 16th-century New Spain without a brief reference to the founder of the order and the spiritual movements he originated. These movements nourished the medieval mysticism in which the Franciscans who came to Mexico were formed. Francis of Assisi (1182–1226) is rightly considered one of the greatest innovators of medieval spirituality. His spiritual project, against the trends of medieval monasticism, opted for a way of living (*forma vitae*) based on the "*vita evangelii*", emphasizing evangelical poverty as one of the distinctive elements of his order. The social reality of the 12th and 13th centuries, in which political power and money were signs of a person's value, provided

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[2] J. Jorge Klor de Alva, "Aztec Spirituality and Nahuatized Christianity," in *South and Meso-American Native Spirituality: From the Cult of the Feathered Serpent to the Theology of Liberation*, ed. Gary H. Gossen (New York, 1993), pp. 174–95.

[3] Two exceptions: Toribio Motolinía's *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España*, has been translated by Francis Borgia Steck as *Motolinía's History of the Indians of New Spain* (Washington, D.C., 1951); and Bernardino de Sahagún's *Historia general de las cosas de la Nueva España* has a translation from the Nahua text by Arthur J. O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble, titled *General History of the Things of New Spain: The Florentine Codex* (Santa Fe, 1950).

a revealing meaning to the name which Francis of Assisi gave to his followers: "lesser brothers".[4] By giving up the right to property, wealth and security and by placing himself in the poor person's world, Francis of Assisi opened innovative channels to medieval religious life.[5]

In spite of some setbacks suffered by this project during the lifetime of Francis of Assisi, its fundamental characteristics were maintained in the spiritual and institutional documents of the order. The practice of these ideals, however, led the brothers to painful disagreements. Without intending to simplify the facts, it can be pointed out that a few years after Francis of Assisi's death, two spiritual movements arose in the Franciscan Order: one sponsored by the general ministers with university training, from Hayman of Favers (1240–44) to Saint Bonaventure (1257–74]), who put the order on tracks not contemplated in the original project, such as intellectual and pastoral activities; and another supported by the closest followers of Saint Francis, commonly known as "spirituals", who defended the simple way of living of the original project, particularly in regard to poverty (*usus pauper*).[6]

The life ideal of poverty, which was of considerable consequence in the encounter of Franciscans with native communities in Mexico, was a copious source of inspiration for medieval Franciscan mystical thinking. An example of such thought patterns is, among others, the *Sacrum commercium*, an anonymous poetic apology of poverty, and the *Apologia pauperum*, a brief theological treatise by Saint Bonaventure defending the friars' poor way of living.[7] However, this ideal did not always run in orthodox paths. At times, above all in central Italy and southern France, it came into contact with the apocalyptic movements of the epoch; and toward the end of the 13th century some brothers, zealous defenders of the *usus pauper*, known as the "Spirituals" and "Fraticelli", followed Joachim of Fiore's millennialism and

[4] In Latin, *fratres minores*.

[5] Giovanni Miccoli, *Francisco de Asís: realidad y memoria de una experiencia cristiana* (Oñate, Spain, 1994), p. 117.

[6] David Burr, *Spiritual Franciscans: From Protest to Persecution in the Century After Saint Francis* (University Park, Pennsylvania, 2001), pp. 43–65.

[7] There are several available editions of these works. In Spanish, see *San Francisco de Asís: biografías, escritos y documentos de la época* (Madrid, 1980), pp. 931–60; and *Obras de San Buenaventura*, Vol. 6 (Madrid, 1949), pp. 331–37.

formed a dissident group within the order.[8] But not all the supporters of the *usus pauper* reached these extremes. There were some brothers such as Angelo Clareno, Ubertino da Casale and Petrus Johannis Olivi, who—not withstanding their radicalism on the *usus pauper*—maintained their fidelity to orthodoxy.[9]

By the end of the 14th century, two well-defined groups integrated the order: those who began to call themselves "Observants" in a certain way historically connected with the "Spirituals" (defenders of the original ideals); and those who were known as "Conventuals" or "Brothers of the Community", who favored the practice of a mitigated poverty.[10] Toward the last years of the 15th century, the "Observants" had acquired a respectable number of friaries, though their way of life was not unified. In some countries (for example, Spain), there were radical movements such as the "Clarenos", "Guadalupenses" or "Fratres de Sancto Evangelio", who—in addition to the strict observance of poverty—proposed a secluded life in small houses or hermitages, with special dedication to contemplation. A strong vocation for the missionary venture was a distinctive feature of these brothers.[11] Out of this group came the Franciscans, who arrived in New Spain in 1524.

Franciscan Mystical Practice Arrives in New Spain

The Franciscans began to arrive in New Spain from 1523 on. In that year Peter of Ghent (or Moer), John of Tecto (or Dekkers or van der Tacht) and John of Agora (or van der Auwera) arrived in Mexico. These three came from the reformed friary of Ghent (Belgium). In 1524 the group known as the "First Twelve" was sent to Mexico by the Minister General, Francisco de los Ángeles Quiñones. This group also came from the reformed friaries of the Province of Saint Gabriel in Spain, characterized by their fondness for the contemplative life. The most eloquent testimony of such affection is the "Obediencia de los

[8] [Badin] Gratien de París, *Historia de la fundación y evolución de la orden de frailes menores en el siglo XIII* (Buenos Aires, 1947), pp. 343–54 and 430–44.

[9] Burr, *Spiritual Franciscans*, pp. 95–100 and 151–58.

[10] Pacifico Sella, *Leone X e la definitiva divisione dell'ordine dei Minori (O. Min.): la bolla* Ite vos *(29 maggio 1517)* (Rome, 2001), pp. 91–117.

[11] A good study of this topic was done by José García Oro, *Protohistoria y primeros capítulos de la evangelización de América* (Venezuela, 1988).

Doce", that is, the mission mandate with which the Minister General sent the Franciscans to Mexico. In it he ordered:

> And if up to now you have stayed in the sycamore or moral fig tree and wished to see who Jesus was, sucking the juice from the Cross, hurry and come down to the active life. And if you have defrauded anyone [due to your cloistered life] you should now pay back four times as much by practicing both the active and the contemplative life, shedding your blood in the name of Christ, if necessary, for the salvation of souls, which carries four times more weight than mere contemplation by itself.[12]

Little attention has been given to this document, which introduces a remarkable change in the contemplative life of the reformed Spanish Franciscans. The document is unique in 16th-century Franciscan literature for the direction given to the contemplative life. Francisco de los Ángeles was well acquainted with the form of life followed by the friars he sent to Mexico, whom he personally chose.[13] When he was elected Minister General of the chapter of Burgos in 1523, he was about to come as a missionary to Mexico. In a way, his mission mandate to the "Twelve" is the mission program of which he dreamed before his election. Contemplation considered as an intimate union with God makes no sense, Francisco de los Ángeles points out, if it lacks the Other's encounter.

The 16th-century biographical sketches of the Franciscans in Mexico—despite their hagiographical tendency—provide interesting testimonies to the intense contemplative life of those friars. The most remarkable case (but not the only one) is that of Fray Martín of Valencia, the first Major Superior of the Franciscans in Mexico. There are two 16th-century biographies of this missionary: one written by Fray Francisco Jiménez (his personal confessor) and another one written by Fray Toribio Motolinía. Both of them offer interesting information on

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[12] "Y si hasta aquí buscastes en el sicomoro o higuera moral y quisistes ver quien fuese Jesús, chupando el jugo de la Cruz, bajad ahora apriesa a la vida activa. Y si por daros solamente a la contemplación de los misterios de la Cruz defraudastes a alguno, volved a los prójimos el cuatro tanto por la vida activa, juntamente con la contemplativa, derramando (si necesario fuere) vuestra propia sangre por el nombre de Cristo por la salvación de las almas: lo cual pesa el cuatro tanto de sola la contemplación" (Jerónimo de Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana* [Mexico, 1997], Book 3, ch. 10, 1: 344).

[13] "Ex ista provincia [S. Gabriel] missi ad terram de Yugatan, Novam dictam Hispaniam XIII probos fratres" (De esta provincia [San Gabriel] envié a tierra de Yucatán, llamada Nueva España, trece virtuosos hermanos) (Rome, General Archive of the Franciscan Order, "Registro general" of 1523).

Martín of Valencia's mystical and contemplative practices.[14] Francisco Jiménez, reporting on Martín of Valencia's visit to the friary of Salamanca (when the writer was the friary's doorman), says that he was able to see how Martín of Valencia spent a long time praying with his arms "stretched out to the sides [*brazos en cruz*] or bodily chastising himself [*disciplinarse*] or kneeling down, devoting a long time to the contemplation of the life and passion of our Lord."[15] These practices, often found in medieval hagiography, are reported also in early Franciscan literature of New Spain. Motolinía writes that when Martín of Valencia was the guardian of Tlaxcala's friary, not only did he teach the native children how to read and write, but also how to pray, "singing hymns with them. And he also taught them how to pray seven *pater nosters*, and seven *ave Marias* with their arms stretched out to the sides".[16]

Personal testimonies from unpublished 16th-century documents support the accuracy of these practices among the first Franciscans in Mexico. The first bishop of Mexico, Fray Juan de Zumárraga (a Franciscan himself, coming from the reformed province of Burgos), in a letter written in 1529 to the Emperor Charles V, pointed out that the Franciscans were giving

> such a marvelous example with their way of living and preaching, that if Your Majesty had granted me no other favor than sending me here to follow their footsteps, I would feel greatly gratified.[17]

Three years later, in 1532, Juan Altamirano, one of the first Spanish settlers of Mexico City, affirmed that the Franciscans

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[14] The Francisco Jiménez biography on Fray Martín de Valencia was written in 1536 and published by Atanasio López in *Archivo ibero-americano* (first series) 26 (1926): 48–83. There is a new edition published by Pedro Ángeles Jiménez: "Vida de fray Martín de Valencia," in *La hermana pobreza: el franciscanismo de la Edad Media y la evangelización novohispana* (Mexico, 1996). The biography written by Toribio de Motolinía is found in *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España* (Mexico, 1969), Tratado 3, ch. 2, pp. 120–29.

[15] "en cruz, o disciplinarse o estar de rodillas o contemplar a sus horas la vida y pasión de Cristo" (Ángeles Jiménez, "Vida de fray Martín," p. 228).

[16] "cantaba con ellos himnos y también enseñaba a rezar en cruz levantados y abiertos los brazos, siete *pater nosters* y siete *ave Marías*" (Motolinía, *Historia de los indios*, Tratado 3, ch. 2, p. 127).

[17] "vida y buen ejemplo y doctrina tan maravillosa, que si Vuestra Majestad no me oviera hecho otra merced más de haberme enviado acá a seguir sus pisadas, ésta es para mi muy crecida" ("Carta a su Majestad del electo obispo de México Fray Juan de Zumárraga," in Joaquín García Icazbalceta, *Don Fray Juan de Zumárraga, primer obispo y arzobispo de México* [Mexico, 1881], Document 1, p. 32).

> in this land surpass friars of any other place [not only] in their way of living, austerity and exemplary life but also in their moderation with regard to eating and drinking, their way of living and in every thing. And on discussing this matter with some people, we have come to agree that it is somewhat of a miracle that Our Lord had sent such saintly persons to lands recently conquered from unbelieving peoples.[18]

Cristóbal of Benavente, another Spanish settler, comparing the life of the Mexican Franciscans with that of the reformed friars in Spain, pointed out that

> [t]he friars of the above-mentioned order, who had lived and [presently] live in the house and monastery of Lord Saint Francis of this city, where this witness has dealt and communicated with them, live a very cloistered life in absolute observance [of their Rule], so much that the present witness believes and holds as a truth that not even the friars from the Saint Gabriel Province, nor those from the Angels Province, nor any others excel them in their holy life, teaching with their exemplary life how God and His Majesty should be served.[19]

Such a commitment to an ascetic life in conformity with the practices of the Spanish Franciscan reform did not lead the friars to a solitary or hermitic life. At times we find excesses, principally in regard to the vow of poverty. Zumárraga in a letter to Francisco del Castillo in 1547 writes:

> The ones who are in need are our brothers in Saint Francis, who do not accept money for masses, or for prayers or for any other purpose. Their house is very poor and, because their infirmary was nothing but a pigpen, many of the sick who came here from all over the province to recover, died.[20]

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[18] "exceden los religiosos destas partes en vida y astinencia y enxenplo, por la mayor parte, comunmente a los religiosos de otras partes, ansi en la abstinencia del comer e beber, y en su vida, como en todo lo demás. E que algunas veces lo ha platicado con algunas personas, e que ansi les ha parescido tanto que así como por milagro tienen, en tierras nuevamente ganadas, e de infieles, haber traído nuestro señor semejantes personas de religiosos" (Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Justicia 1006).

[19] "Los religiosos de la dicha orden que [h]an habitado e habitan en la casa e monesterio de señor san Françisco de esta dicha çibdad, donde este testigo [h]a tratado e comunicado con los dichos religiosos e les [h]a visto vevir muy recogidamente en toda oservançia e tanto que cree este testigo e tiene por çierto que ni los religiosos de la Provinçia de san Graviel e la de los Angeles ni otros ningunos les fazen ventaja en su buena vida, dando enxenplo de dotrina de como Dios nuestro señor debe de ser servido e su Majestad" (Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Justicia 1006).

[20] "Los necesitados son nuestros hermanos franciscos que no toman limosna pecuniaria, ni por misas, ni por obsequias, ni de otra manera, y tienen una casa muy ruin,

In spite of this extreme asceticism, several forces led the Franciscans in New Spain to look for a way of living different from that of the Spanish provinces. First of all, as has already been mentioned, it was the mandate from the Minister General, Francisco de los Ángeles Quiñones, which ordered them to combine the contemplative life with missionary activity. It was, however, an unexpected circumstance which forced them to give a new meaning to their traditional ways. The Franciscans found in the natives' simple way of living a serious challenge to their religious profession, especially in regards to the *vita pauper*. Mendieta writes:

> The common native's dress is an old mantle torn into a thousand pieces, so that if St. Francis were still living in this world and would see these natives, he would feel ashamed of himself and confused, admitting neither that poverty was his sister nor that he should be praised on her account.[21]

And he adds this line, worthy of a missionary anthology:

> I say that many natives, in spite of being so lowly and despised—as some people want them to be—have shown by their deeds that they spurn the world and wish to follow Jesus Christ with such efficacy and such good spirit as I, a poor Spaniard and lesser brother, might wish to in following the evangelical life.[22]

Native Spirituality

If the first Franciscans in New Spain were rich in mystical practices nourished in medieval Christianity, the Mesoamerican natives were

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y por no tener una enfermería sino una pocilga muchos enfermos que aquí se venían a curar de toda la provincia, se les morían" (Letter of Juan de Zumárraga to Francisco del Castillo, in Richard Greenleaf, ed., *Zumarraga and his Family, Letters to Viscaya, 1536–1548* [Washington, D.C., 1979], p. 102).

[21] "El vestido del indio plebeyo es una mantilla vieja hecha mil pedazos que si el padre San Francisco viviera hoy en el mundo y viera a estos indios, se avergonzara y confundiera, confesando que ya no era su hermana la pobreza ni tenía que alabarse de ella" (Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, Book 4, ch. 21, 2: 108).

[22] "Digo esto porque con ser los indios tan bajos y despreciados como algunos los quieren hacer, ha habido muchos de ellos que han mostrado muy de veras en sus obras el menosprecio del mundo y deseo de seguir a Jesucristo con tanta eficacia y con tan buen espíritu, cuanto yo, pobre español y fraile menor, quisiera haber tenido en seguimiento de la vida evangélica que a Dios profesé" (Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, Book 4, ch. 22, 2: 112).

equally rich in practices very close to those of the Franciscans, although these had emerged from a completely different religious context.

The Mesoamerican religion was based, as Miguel León-Portilla points out, on a strong relationship of humanity with the universe of the gods.[23] According to the Mesoamerican cosmogony, life—both human and cosmic—was possible only thanks to the sacrifice and penance of the primordial gods, among others Quetzalcoatl, the Feathered Serpent god, symbol of divine wisdom, whose body bled to give life to inert human bones. Actually, the Nahuatl word for referring to a human being is *macehualtin*, which literally means "those who are worthy [of existing] by a divine sacrifice." The "abominable human sacrifices" so frequently mentioned in the 16th-century Franciscan chronicles were nothing else for the Nahua people than a memorial of the original action which made possible all life in the universe. The Mesoamerican natives felt a need for sustaining the cosmic order, always at risk of being destroyed.

In spite of this religious urgency for human sacrifices, many old Nahua texts express the value of human life and a concern for righteousness. The Nahua children were taught lessons at home, as well as in schools and temples, on what was good and righteous and how to avoid evil so they could live according to their personal destiny. They were also taught how to celebrate properly the religious rites with which one was made worthy of achieving his destiny in accordance with the projects of Ometeolt, the dual god and supreme divinity.[24]

The Franciscan Bernardino of Sahagún offers interesting data on this Nahua educational system which was fundamental for the transmission of religious traditions and practices. The Franciscan writes that at the birth of a male child, his parents used to offer him to one of the two educational centers located near the temples, namely the *Calmecatl*, where those who would become ministers of the gods received their education; or the *Telpochcalli*, where those who would be dedicated to military affairs received their training.[25] On handing over their children to the *Telpochcalli*, the parents used to say: "He will enter *into the house of penance and weeping*…, because in this place the treasures of god are obtained by the merit of *praying and*

[23] Miguel León-Portilla, "Those Made Worthy by Divine Sacrifice: The Faith of Ancient Mexico," in Gossen, *South and Meso-American Native Spirituality*, pp. 41–63.
[24] Gossen, *South and Meso-American Native Spirituality*, pp. 41–63.
[25] Sahagún, *Historia general*, Appendix to Book 3, ch. 4, 1: 332.

doing penance and by asking god to have mercy on them and to favor them with victory."[26] The same words were used in handing over the children to the *Calmecatl*, changing only the last sentence ("may god have pity and mercy on them so as to grant them his riches") and adding this paragraph:

> We humbly beg you to receive and accept him as your child to begin his life with the ministers of our gods, *in that house where day and night all the penance exercises are done by kneeling down and crawling on the elbows, praying, begging, crying, and sighing* before our lord.[27]

Monastic Piety and Educational Centers

The devotional practices of the Franciscan friaries and those of the Nahua educational centers are worth analysing if one wants to understand the first mystical practices in New Spain.

The first intensive contacts of the Franciscans with native communities were given in educational centers which the friars established right alongside their precarious friaries. Mendieta says that in every town where the Franciscans founded a friary, they asked the native governors to build "a lower chamber in the form of a large hall where their children would be lodged and taught."[28] It was not a question of just building a simple dormitory, but instead of setting up a complete educational center, since the governors were asked to build "some other small rooms for the children's service and for whatever they would need."[29]

Such Franciscan centers, which might be considered a simple replica of the *Calmecatl*, had in fact a more complex origin. The Franciscans, since their 13th-century Chinese missions, had been practicing

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[26] "Entrará en *la casa de penitencia y de lloro*…Porque en este lugar se merecen los tesoros de dios *orando y haciendo penitencia* y pidiendo a dios les haga misericordia y merced de darles victoria" (Sahagún, *Historia general*, Appendix to Book 3, ch. 4, 1: 332, emphasis mine).

[27] "dios les haga misericordia y merced de darles sus riquezas"; "Humildemente rogamos que le recibáis y toméis por hijo para entrar a vivir con los ministros de nuestros dioses *en aquella casa en donde hacen todos los ejercicios de penitencia, de día y de noche, andando de rodillas y de codos, orando, rogando y llorando* y suspirando ante nuestro señor" (Sahagún, *Historia general*, ch. 7, 1: 337, emphasis mine).

[28] "un aposento bajo en que oviese una pieza muy grande en donde durmiesen los niños, sus hijos" (Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, Book 3, ch. 15, 1: 362).

[29] "otras piezas pequeñas de servicio para lo que les fuese necesario" (Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, Book 3, ch. 15, 1: 362).

this type of educational system.[30] In European friaries, at least since the 14th century, the Franciscans used to receive children into their monasteries for social and educational goals, a practice that the general chapters of the order tried to stop (without much success) because even the most reformed friaries opposed such a mandate. They argued that these young people helped them to maintain a more strict observance of the Franciscan rule since the children helped to carry out several activities outside of the friaries' walls.[31]

The way of life of these children, in both European and Mexican educational centers, was very similar. Mexican children, as in Europe, learned not only Christian doctrine, but also how to read and write, the liturgy of the hours, and how to serve holy mass. The difference was that in Mexico the Franciscans used these educational centers as the backdrop for practicing their devotional and penitential life. Mendieta says that the friars in these centers

> prayed the holy office in front of the children…, and [in front of them] they used to start to pray sometimes standing up, others kneeling down and at times with arms stretched out to their sides. Also there the friars used to go at midnight to pray the matins and to flagellate themselves.[32]

Such religious exercises were quite similar to those practiced in the *Calmecatl*. Sahagún points out that in the *Calmecatl*

> [e]very midnight, everybody got up to pray, and he who did not get up or wake up was chastised by piercing his ears, chest, thighs and legs, and by sticking the needles of a cactus into his body in the presence of all the idols' ministers, so they would learn their lesson.[33]

Additional information on the monastic way of life which the Mexican children followed in these centers is found in contemporary news

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[30] Anastasius van den Wyngaert et al., *Sinica Franciscana*, 8 vols (Quaracchi, Italy, 1929–75), 1: xci–cix.

[31] Francisco Morales, *Ethnic and Social Background of the Franciscan Friars in Seventeenth Century Mexico* (Washington, D.C., 1973), pp. 8–9.

[32] "delante de los niños rezaban el oficio divino…, y allí se ponían en oración, a veces en pie y a veces de rodillas y a veces puestos los brazos en cruz. También allí iban a rezar sus maitines a media noche y hacían su disciplina" (Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, Book 3, ch. 15, 1: 363).

[33] "Cada media noche, todos se levantaban a hacer oración, y quien no se levantaba y despertaba, castigábanle punzándole las orejas y el pecho y muslos y piernas y metiéndole las puntas de maguey por todo el cuerpo en presencia de todos los ministros de los ídolos para que se escarmentasen" (Sahagún, *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*, Appendix to Book 3, ch. 8, 1: 339).

documents. The Dominican friar Bernardo de Santa María in 1531 wrote that in the centers,

> [m]any of these natives explain literally the sermons and the Gospel, and many of them know how to sing and serve Mass, and they pray vespers and all the hours of the Office. [They carry out] all that very well without the friars taking part, except that they [the friars] instruct them [the natives] in all that they are going to do.[34]

A text from the second half of the 16th century on the young boys studying in Santa Cruz of Tlatelolco in the Mexico City area confirms these practices of monastic religiosity:

> In this college these students have a lifestyle in the refectory and dormitory similar to that of the friars, and every day they go to the church which is next [to their college] in procession wearing blue or purple robes, and on the feast days they attend the sermon, the Mass and the Vespers, and they themselves officiate.[35]

By 1531 over 5000 children were receiving this type of education in several frairies of central Mexico, for exemple: Cholula, Huejotzingo, Tlalmanalco, Tepeaca, Cuauhtitlan, Tula, Coyoacán, Acapistla, and Tlaxcala. The most numerous group was in Mexico City, where Peter of Ghent's center taught some 600 children.[36] This educational center was important not only for its number of children but for its advanced program of studies. Thanks to the humanistic formation of various friars, it was possible to include in such a program the study of classical Latin. A French Franciscan, Arnald of Bassac, was the first Latin professor in Peter of Ghent's school, from where he went a few years later to the school at Tlatelolco.

Was it debated whether to accept Nahua children into the Franciscan Order? This question has brought interminable discussions. It is known that in 1527 the Franciscans received into the novitiate three Nahua children. None of them persevered, Motolinía says, "because

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[34] "Hay muchos de los naturales que declaran los sermones e evangelio literalmente e [h]ay muchos de ellos que saben cantar e oficiar una misa e dicen vísperas e todas las [h]oras cantadas muy bien sin intervenir entre ellos frailes, salvo que ellos están instruidos en los que por si lo fazen" (Archivo General de Indias, Justicia 1006).

[35] "El orden que estos [jóvenes] tienen en su colegio, en concierto de su refectorio y dormitorio, es a manera de religiosos, y cada día van a la iglesia que la tienen allí junto, a oír misa en procesión, vestidos de ropas azules o moradas, y las fiestas van al sermón y misa y vísperas, y ellos mismos las ofician" (Joaquín García Icazbalceta, ed., *Códice franciscano*, 2nd ed. [Mexico, 1941], p. 64).

[36] Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Justicia 1006.

they [the Franciscans] tried to test them before they [the natives] were ready."[37] This unfortunate experience had disastrous consequences for future admission of the Nahuas into the order, a topic that by itself deserves a complete chapter.[38]

Penitential Practices

By the 1530s, the monastic practices of the educational centers began to be exported to the first Christian communities of the Mexican towns. Fray Toribio Motolinía, who formed many of these communities, says:

> On Holy Thursday and the two following days they come to the divine services, and at night they flagellate themselves. All of them, men as well as women, belong to the Confraternity of the Cross and not only on this night but on every Friday of the year, and on three days of the week during Lent, they flagellate themselves in the churches, the men in one part and the women in another. They do this before ringing the *Ave Maria* bell and on some Fridays after dark…They proceed with crosses and lights from church to church and flagellate themselves. [In some towns] there are 5000 or 6000 natives, in others 7000 or 8000 and occasionally 10,000…and in Tlaxcala I think in this year [1539] there were 15,000 or 20,000 men and women and boys, crippled and maimed. Among the crippled I saw one who attracted attention, because both his legs were paralyzed from the knees down. He hobbled forward on his knees and, with his right hand on the ground for support, he took the whip with the other hand, although he had all he could do to help himself forward by means of both hands. Some whip themselves with wire scourges and those who cannot manage to do this use cords instead, but these do not cause less pain.[39]

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[37] "por quererlos probar antes de tiempo" (Motolinía, *Historia de los indios de Nueva España*, Tratado 2, ch. 8, p. 103).

[38] Morales, *Ethnic and Social Background*, pp. 22–53.

[39] "El jueves santo, con los otros días siguientes, vienen a los oficios divinos, como en días principales, y a la noche en el hacer de la disciplina, ansí hombres como mujeres son cofrades de la cruz de Cristo, e no sólo esta noche, mas todos los viernes del año y en cuaresma hacen la disciplina tres veces en la semana en sus iglesias, los hombres a una parte y las mujeres a la otra, antes del ave maría; y algunos viernes aun después de anochecido, con sus lumbres y cruces se van de una iglesia en otra disciplinándose más. Son más de cinco mil los disciplinantes, y en otras siete u ocho mil y en partes diez mil. Y en esta de Tlaxcala me parece que había en este año quince o veinte mil hombres, e mujeres e mochachos, cojos y mancos. Y entre los cojos vi uno que cierto era notable cosa mirar, porque él tenía secas ambas piernas, de las rodillas abajo, y con las rodillas y mano derecha siempre ayudándose y con la otra

These penitential practices of the early Nahua Christian communities, besides their medieval Spanish background, had a strong relationship with the penitential practices of native religion. Book 2 of the *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España* by Bernardino of Sahagún provides a great deal of information on these practices, which included the piercing of their bodies with green reeds or cactus tips or going "at dark, naked, to the mountains where they had their devotion."[40] They also practiced fasting days, for example the *Atamalquilistli*, which meant (according to Sahagún) "fasting on bread and water, since during eight days they did not eat anything but tamales cooked without salt, and did not drink anything but simple water."[41] The Nahuas had great reverence for these fasting days "because they said that those who did not fast, even though they would eat secretly without the knowledge of anybody, god punished them by hurting them with leprosy."[42]

The Lenten practices of the Catholic church found in such Nahua traditions a fertile soil. Writing about the people of Tlaxcala, Motolinía says: "Many old people fast during Lent and go frequently to the churches; on hearing the matins bell, they get up to pray and cry over their sins and many times to flagellate themselves without anybody imposing it on them."[43] And then he adds: "In this land God brings many old men and women to do penance; they find strength out of their weakness to fast and flagellate themselves."[44] Another text from the same author associates these penitential practices with veneration of the Holy Cross. Motolinía writes: "The natives hold the cross in

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se iba disciplinando, que en sólo andar tenía ya harto trabajo. De ellos se disciplinan con disciplinas de sangre, y los que no alcanzan ni pueden haber aquellas estrellitas, azótanse con disciplinas de cordel que no escuecen menos" (Motolinía, *Historia de los indios*, Tratado 1, ch. 13, p. 55–56.)

[40] "de noche desnudos a los montes donde tenían devoción" (Sahagún, *Historia general*, Appendix to Book 2, 1: 284).

[41] "ayuno de pan y agua, pues ninguna otra cosa comían en ocho días, sino unos tamales hechos sin sal, ni bebían otra cosa sino agua clara" (Sahagún, *Historia general*, Appendix to Book 2, 1: 270).

[42] "porque decían que los que no ayunaban, aunque secretamente comiesen y no lo supiese nadie, dios los castigaba hiriéndolos de lepra" (Sahagún, *Historia general*, Appendix to Book 2, 1: 270).

[43] "Ayunan muchos viejos la cuaresma y frecuentan las iglesias; levantándose cuando oyen la campana de maitines a orar y llorar sus pecados y muchas veces a hacer la disciplina, sin nadie lo poner en ello" (Motolinía, *Memoriales*, Part 1, ch. 40, p. 134).

[44] "Y trae Dios en esta tierra muchos viejos e viejas a penitencia, los cuales sacan fuerza de flaqueza para ayunar y disciplinarse" (Motolinía, *Memoriales*, Part 1, ch. 40, p. 134).

such great veneration that many of them fast on Friday, and also on that day, out of devotion to and reverence for the Cross, they forgo their marital rights."[45]

The penitential practices of the new Christian communities opened the door to the sacrament of penance. This practice had a remarkable impact on the friars. Motolinía, commenting on Psalm 112:7–8 ("To set them with princes, even with the princes of his people"),[46] applies the biblical passage to the natives of Mexico. And he adds that many of them could rightly say what the Book of Wisdom 5:1 states: "Then shall the righteous men stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted them."[47] That is, the Mexican natives were the righteous men who stood before God, in great boldness, denouncing those who had afflicted them (i.e. the Spaniards). Motolinía sustains that Wisdom 5:4 refers to the natives: "These are those whom we held sometimes in derision and a proverb of reproach."[48] Motolinía glosses this sentence with these words: "these [whom] we scorned and denigrated and considered as animals, God counts among his chosen ones; and we, for making fun of them, fell behind and [are] in a lower place."[49]

From Penitential Practices to Mystical Rapture

The distance from penitential practices to mystical rapture is short. In the minds of 16th-century Franciscans, visions and revelations were unquestionable proof of personal encounters with God. This might be the explanation for the numerous narratives in their chronicles dealing with the miraculous visions of the recently converted Nahuas. We still lack a comparative study of these narratives as opposed to those in the European chronicles. In any case, what seems clear is that the

[45] "Los indios la tienen [la cruz] con tanta veneración que muchos ayunan los viernes y se abstienen aquel día de tocar a sus mujeres, por devoción y reverencia de la cruz" (Motolinía, *Historia de los indios*, Tratado 2, ch. 9, p. 108).

[46] "Ut collocet eos cum principibus populi sui" (Wisdom 5:1; cited in Motolinía, *Historia de los indios*, Tratado 2, ch. 9, p. 108).

[47] "Stabant justi in magna constantia adversus eos qui se angustiaverunt" (Wisdom 5:4; cited in Motolinía, *Historia de los indios*, Tratado 2, ch. 9, p. 108).

[48] "I sunt quos aliquando habuimus in dirisum et in similitudinem improperii" (Psalm 112:7–8; cited in Motolinía, *Memoriales*, Part 1, ch. 36, p. 128).

[49] "éstos [que] improperábamos con vituperios y los teníamos por bestias, los cuenta Dios entre los justos e nos, por burlar de ellos, nos quedamos atrás y en muy bajo lugar" (Motolinía, *Memoriales*, Part 1, ch. 36, p. 128).

Franciscans saw in the first Christian Nahua generation the same favors which were attributed to the mystics of their time.

The Eucharistic sacrament (whose administration to the Nahuas aroused strong controversies) occupies a prominent place in these narratives.[50] In Motolinía's writings, for example, there are some accounts dealing with this topic in which he affirms that a number of people saw "a very resplendent child" when the priest held the host in his hands, or that during the celebration of the mass the natives saw "our crucified Redeemer in a great flood of light… [and] a globe or flame of fire."[51] In Tlaxcala, according to Mendieta, Alonso de Ordaz—a Franciscan priest well known for his intense spiritual life—told him that a native resident of that town

> [o]ne day, attending Mass with little faith, felt a new commotion in his spirit, and looking at the altar with faith, when the priest was consuming the Blessed Sacrament, he saw a great brightness coming out of the priest. That was a reason to assert his faith, which previously had been weak.[52]

A similar story was told by Melchor Ocampo, a Franciscan resident in the friary of Tula. He reported to Mendieta that a native of Tula, at the elevation of the host, saw "[a] child wearing a swaddling cloth whiter than the snow… And when the native saw that, he exclaimed to God: Lord, have pity on me so that with your mercy I will never offend you."[53]

Dreams and revelations also form an important part of the Franciscan narratives. Undoubtedly many of their features come from European mystical writings; for example, the warnings to do penance or the announcement of death's proximity. Such is the case narrated

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[50] On the controversies over the administration of the Eucharist to the natives, see Lino Gómez Canedo, *Evangelización y conquista: experiencia franciscana en Hispanoamérica* (Mexico City, 1977), pp. 182–87.

[51] "un niño muy resplandeciente"; "a nuestro redentor crucificado con gran esplendor,… [y] un globo o llama de fuego" (Motolinía, *Historia de los indios*, Tratado 2, ch. 8, p. 103). In 16th-century Franciscan friaries there are many frescoes representing these Eucharistic visions.

[52] "Estando un día oyendo misa con poca fe, sintió en su espíritu una nueva alteración y mirando con fe el altar, estando el sacerdote consumiendo el Santísimo Sacramento, vio que salía de él una grandísima claridad, lo cual fue causa de afirmar su fe en que antes estaba tibio" (Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, Book 4, ch. 24, 2: 122).

[53] "un niño con unos pañales más blancos que la nieve… Y cuando el indio vio esto exclamó a Dios diciendo, 'Señor apiadaos de mi que con vuestro favor jamás nunca os ofenderé' " (Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, Book 4, ch. 24, 2: 122).

by Motolinía about Benito, a young man from Cholula, who told the Franciscan in confession that he had been taken in spirit to the punishment of hell (*penas del infierno*). After imploring God's mercy, he

> was taken to a place of great pleasure, happiness and delight. And the angel who took him said: Benito, God wants to have mercy on you. Go and make a good confession and prepare yourself very well because you are coming here by God's mercy.[54]

A similar case, also narrated by Motolinía, refers to another young man, this one from Santa Ana Chiautempan, who before his death

> was taken away in spirit, and carried out by some black people. They took him through a very sad and awful road and through it he was taken to a dark place of very great tortures. And when those who carried him wanted to throw him over there, the young man exclaimed and said with loud cries: *Sancta Mariae, Sancta Mariae* (with an *ae* that the natives use in the vocative case)…And [once he was] saved and taken away from that danger…he returned from his spirit to his body. And his mother said she had thought he was dead, and as such had considered his body all that time.[55]

In Mendieta's chronicle we find similar cases. There is, among others, the case of an old man from Atzacpozalco who used to work in the friary of Xochimilco. One day, sailing in his little boat on the lake of Xochimilco, "a very well-dressed and good-looking Indian girl appeared to him…and she dealt with secret things that were related to him."[56] After this talk, the Lady asked him to go to Xochimilco's friary and tell the guardian to admonish the town's people "so that the sinners and depraved persons would amend their ways (especially as concerning the fleshly vice) and would do penance to calm God's

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[54] "fue llevado a un lugar de mucho placer, alegría y deleite. Y había dicho el ángel que lo llevaba: 'Benito, Dios quiere haber misericordia de ti. Ve y confiésate muy bien y aparéjate muy bien que aquí has de venir por la misericordia de Dios'" (Motolinía, *Memoriales*, Part 1, ch. 44, pp. 139–40).

[55] "fue en espíritu arrebatado y llevado por unos negros y lleváronlo por un camino muy triste y penoso, por el cual camino fue llevado a un lugar oscuro y de grandísimos tormentos. Y queriéndole echar en ellos los que lo llevaban, el mancebo a grandes voces llamaba y decía 'Sancta Mariae, Sancta Mariae' (que a questa *e* añaden más en el vocativo)…E librado y sacado de aquel peligro…tornó al cuerpo de su espíritu. Que a esto decía su madre que lo tenía por muerto y por tal tuvo a su cuerpo todo aquel tiempo" (Motolinía, *Memoriales*, Part 1, ch. 44, pp. 139–40).

[56] "se le apareció una India muy bien aderezada y de buen parecer,…y le trató cosas secretas que tocaban a su persona" (Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, Book 4, ch. 24, 2: 124).

wrath."[57] The same chronicler writes that when he was guardian of Santa Ana Chiautempan in 1588, a lady by the name of María told him that a girl, after a long sickness, one day called and told her:

> Dear mother, do not be sorry for me, do not cry, since the will of my God and Lord is that I finish this mortal life and go to Him. And know that I will lose the power of speech and from tomorrow till the day of my death I will not be able to talk. [Shortly after] at the time of the ringing of the *ánimas* bell, she came around and began to talk,… and shortly after gave her soul to Him who created it.[58]

Most of the cases mentioned up until now have referred to natives who were already baptized and had a certain experience of the Christian life. But there are also cases of people who were newly converted, with little or no experience of the Christian walk. Some of them are particularly interesting. Mendieta writes about a singular case related to him by Gaspar Rodríguez, a Franciscan who had been his subject in Toluca and afterwards went to northern Mexico into the so-called "Chichimeca territory".[59] He says that in the small town of Apozo (Zacatecas), a recently converted woman, irritated by her husband's sickness, offered herself to the devil, saying "el Diablo me lleve." After a while, the chronicle goes on:

> The devil, disguised as an Indian quarryman who had died some days before, appeared to her and asked the Indian woman, who was sitting close to the fire, to get up and follow him. She—frightened upon seeing him whom she thought was dead—almost fainted, and the devil went out to the door. When the Indian woman came to, the devil returned to her and told her: "come with me, otherwise I will drown you." On saying that, he came close to her and placed what appeared to be iron shackles around her throat, which left her beside herself almost five days, without eating or talking, to the point that her neighbors did not know what to do. That happened on Monday of Holy Week. And she said that

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[57] "para que se enmendasen los pecadores y viciosos (especialmente en el vicio de la carne) e hiciesen penitencia para amansar la ira de Dios" (Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, Book 4, ch. 24, 2: 124).

[58] "Madre mía, no tengas pena por mí, no llores que la voluntad de mi Dios y Señor es que yo acabe esta vida mortal y vaya para él. Y sábete que luego perderé el habla y mañana no hablaré hasta la hora de mi muerte. [Dentro de poco],… al tiempo que se tañe para rezar por las ánimas, volvió en si y comenzó a hablar,… y desde a poco tiempo, dio su alma al que la crió" (Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, Book 4, ch. 25, 2: 126).

[59] The word "Chichimeca" is used in 16th-century chronicles to refer to the nomadic inhabitants of the arid territory of northern Mexico.

> on the morning of Easter Sunday she saw her little house adorned with courtly cloths, and then she saw a very well-organized procession of very good-looking young men who surpassed in beauty the children of the Spaniards. They carried a very big and resplendent cross in the middle [of the procession] and at the end of it a child—the most beautiful of all the people—who came with a precious book in his hands. The child came to her bed and called her by her name and consoled her and told her that he was the *Tepapaquiltiani*, which means the Comforter.[60]

The features of this narrative are worthy of note because of their mixture of European and Nahua elements. Above all, it is worth noticing the name given to the "niño más hermoso de todos", namely *Tepapaquiltiani*, which means "the Comforter". As far as we can see, the Nahua Christian literature never used this title for any Person of the Holy Trinity. The Holy Spirit is always mentioned in the Latinized form *Spiritu Sancto*; God the Son is normally called *Tepiltzin* (The Venerable Son), or more formally, *Dios ca Tepiltzin* (God, the Venerable Son); and God the Father is called *Tetatzin* (The Venerable Father) or more formally *Dios ca Tetatzin* (God, the Venerable Father).[61] In this instance, Mendieta is picking up Nahua Christian expressions not preserved in the Nahua Christian texts we have at hand.

From the same Gaspar Rodríguez, Mendieta gathered another narrative related to the conversion of the "Chichimecas". Mendieta says that in one of Gaspar's missionary travels to northern Mexico, he visited a town in which its unbaptized native governor had died a few days before. The town inhabitants told Gaspar that

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[60] "Se le apareció el diablo en forma de un indio cantero, que algunos días antes había muerto, y dijo a la india que estaba sentada junto al fuego, que se levantase y la siguiese. Ella, espantada de ver al que tenía por muerto, quedó medio desmayada, y él se salió a la puerta. Y como volvió en sí la india, tornó a ella y le dijo: 'Vete conmigo, si no ahogarte he'. Y diciendo esto, llegóse a ella y enclavóle, a su parecer, un hierro por la garganta con lo cual quedó fuera de si más de cinco días, sin comer, ni hablar, de suerte que los de su casa y vecinos no sabían que le hacer. Acaeció esto en lunes de semana santa. Y dice [la mujer recién convertida] que en la mañana de la resurrección vio su casilla toda entoldada de paños de corte, y luego vio venir una procesión muy ordenada de mancebos muy hermosos, que excedían en hermosura a los hijos de los españoles, y traían en medio una cruz muy grande y resplandeciente, y al cabo de la procesión venía un niño más hermoso de todos, con un libro muy precioso en las manos, el cual se llegó a su lecho y le llamó por su nombre y la consoló y le dijo que él era el *Tepapaquiltiani*, que quiere decir consolador" (Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, Book 4, ch. 26, 2: 132–33).

[61] Cf. Susanne Klaus, *Uprooted Christianity: The Preaching of the Christian Doctrine in Mexico Based on the Franciscan Sermons of the 16th Century Written in Nahuatl* (Bonn, 1999), p. 275.

> [w]hen he was about to die, the above-mentioned Indian, his lord, talked to them and told them that a Christian priest would arrive there; [and he asked them] to hold him in great reverence and to pay attention to his words since he came as a representative from God for their salvation. And on finishing this talk, he passed away.[62]

Mendieta's interpretation of this narrative takes us back to the mystical and spiritual world from which these narratives originate. He writes:

> And that the above-mentioned Indian chief would say such words cannot be [explained] except in one of these two forms: either by divine inspiration, since he was dying under the promise and with the desire for baptism, and consequently was baptized with the baptism of the Holy Spirit—which the theologians call *Flaminis*—or, [supposing] he died as a non-Christian, the devil spoke through his mouth under the will and command of God.[63]

The Inspirational Sources: Franciscan Mysticism and Hagiography

Contemporary historiography has given little attention to these narratives, considering them stories told by missionaries who were simple-minded or naive. A commentary on these narratives by Motolinía points out the risk of accepting this position. Motolinía writes:

> Many of these natives, having already converted [to Christianity], had many and diverse revelations and [supernatural] visions; and for some of these [natives], the good testimony of their life and the mode and simplicity with which they relate their visions would seem to lead to their being considered true. But since others might be illusions, I do not worry about believing them, nor refrain from writing about them in particular, because I think that many people will not believe me. If they

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[62] "[e]stando para morir el dicho indio su señor, les hizo una plática diciendo como un sacerdote cristiano vendría luego allí, que le tuviesen en gran reverencia y le creyesen y guardasen sus palabras porque iba de parte de Dios para su salvación de ellos. Y que acabada su plática murió" (Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, Book 4, ch. 26, 2: 133–34).

[63] "Y que aquel indio principal dijese aquellas palabras, no pudo ser sino en una de dos maneras; o por inspiración divina, muriendo él ya en voto y deseo y por el consiguiente bautizado con el bautismo del Espíritu Santo (que los teólogos llaman *Flaminis*) o si murió infiel, habló por su boca el demonio, compelido por la voluntad y mandamiento de Dios" (Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, Book 4, ch. 26, 2: 133–34).

> do not believe in worldly things, how could they believe in supernatural things?[64]

If, as this text points out, Franciscan ingenuity is not the preferred way to find the origin of these narratives, where can we go to find their inspirational sources? I propose two alternatives: Franciscan hagiography and Franciscan mysticism.

It is remarkable that most of the narratives mentioned above were related by Franciscans who were particularly close to the mystical tradition of the Spanish Franciscan reformed provinces. We can mention, among others, Alonso de Ordaz, Melchor Benavente, and the well known chroniclers Toribio Motolinía and Jerónimo de Mendieta. From the little data we have, we perceive that these figures came from a religious world characterized by austerity, contemplation and a familiarity with supernatural events. Alonso de Ordaz came to Mexico in 1530 from the province of Andalucía. He led an austere life: "he used to eat only once a day and [even] then, [he ate] little. He did not drink wine until he reached old age; by reason of the needs of his age and by the request of his superiors and other friars, he [finally began] to drink a little."[65] His prayer life was outstanding:

> He received many favors from God our Lord, which he concealed with much care. During the day time he was always studying either in the library or in his room, and he used to combine reading with holy prayer, because (like another Saint Bonaventure) whatever he speculated with his intelligence, he reflected on it with the effect of prayer.[66]

This Franciscan learned the Nahua and Otomi languages, in which he preached the word of God for many years. He told Mendieta about

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[64] "Muchos destos naturales y convertidos, diversas y muchas revelaciones y visiones [hubieron], y algunos dellos, por el buen testimonio de su vida y por la manera y simplicidad con que cuentan la visión, parece llevar camino de ser verdad. Pero porque otras serán ilusiones, no hago mucho caso de las creer, ni dejar de las escribir en particular, y porque pienso que de muchos no seré creído. Si las cosas terrenales no creen ¿cómo creerán las cosas sobrenaturales?" (Motolinía, *Memoriales*, Part 1, ch. 44, pp. 140–41).

[65] "comía una sola vez al día y entonces poco. No bebió vino, hasta que siendo viejo, por la necesidad que tenía, bebía un poco rogándole los prelados y otros religiosos" (Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, Book 5, ch. 50, 2: 414).

[66] "Recibió muchas mercedes de Dios Nuestro Señor, las cuales él con mucho cuidado encubría. De día estaba a la continua estudiando en la librería o en su celda y juntaba a la lección la santa oración, porque (como otro San Buenaventura) cuando especulaba con el entendimiento, lo rumiaba con el efecto de la oración" (Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, Book 5, ch. 50, 2: 415).

many indigenous visions of the Eucharist. Melchor de Benavente, another figure who recounted indigenous visions of the Holy Sacrament, came from the Spanish province of San Gabriel. He was a man of continuous and fervent prayer and a prominent member of a Franciscan group who tried to found a new province in Mexico because the one already established (the Holy Gospel Province) was losing, according to him, its reformed way of life.[67]

Similarly, Toribio Motolinía and Jerónimo de Mendieta, through numerous writings, have left unquestionable testimonies to their form of living. Remarks by Alonso Pérez (one of the conquerors of Mexico) written in 1532 describe their life with great lucidity: "[The Franciscans] have lived and [presently] live a very cloistered and secluded life, and if some of them get out [of their friary], it is by reason of begging alms or converting the natives or looking after them."[68]

A matter of singular importance—on which, unfortunately, we still have little research—is the spiritual and mystical formation of these friars. There were some classical works which provided the foundation for their Franciscan formation. Among those, besides Saint Francis's rule, were his biographies and several writings of Saint Bonaventure, which we know circulated in the Spanish Franciscan provinces as well as in the Mexican ones.

The *Speculum disciplinae ad novitios* by Saint Bonaventure was one of the writings most widely used by the Franciscans in the formation of their friars. There are several Spanish 15th-century editions of this work and some commentaries written in Mexico during colonial times.[69] The importance of this text rests in the fact that it was a sort of *vade mecum* for any young man who intended to become a Franciscan. Saint Bonaventure wrote it to inculcate in the novices what seemed to be the good manners of any friar. Here one can find how a Franciscan should behave in the refectory at meal time ("circumspect eyes, calm

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[67] Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, Book 5, ch. 52, p. 422.

[68] "[h]an vivido e viven muy recogidos y encerrados, y si algunos dellos [h]an salido e salen, es a demandar limosna e a convertir los naturales de la tierra y a mirar por ellos" (Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Justicia 1002).

[69] Cf. *Opuscula [Regula novitiorum. Soliloquium. Lignum vitae. Speculum disciplinae ad novitios. De triplici via. Stimulus amoris]* (Brescia, 1495). For Mexico see *Cartilla y doctrina espiritual para la crianza y educación de los novicios que tomaren el hábito en la orden de N. P. S. Francisco: en la cual brevemente se les enseña lo que deben hacer, conforme a la doctrina de N. Seráfico Doctor San Buenaventura y a lo que se usa y practica en la Santa Provincia del Santo Evangelio* (Mexico, 1775).

lips"), during manual labor ("with discretion, diligence and honesty"), or while walking ("without impulsiveness or arrogance").[70] The work follows closely the medieval monastic way of life, as can be seen by its frequent quotations from *Institutiones monasticas ad novitios* by Hugh of Saint Victor.[71] Notwithstanding this line of thought, the book includes some original themes from Franciscan spirituality such as a strong relationship with God through human events, a simple way of praying (using set prayers such as the *Benedictus Deus* and the *Ave Maria*), humility, and reverence / filial love for the elderly.[72]

Another work of Saint Bonaventure, certainly closer to mystical themes (though we are not certain that it circulated in Mexico) is *De profectu religiosorum*.[73] Its relevance lies in the fact that three of its chapters (75 to 77) are dedicated to visions and revelations. Interestingly enough, in none of them appears any encouragement for these experiences; on the contrary, Saint Bonaventure expresses his concern about accepting them because of the risk of their being taken as a sign of virtue and sanctity.[74]

A text for which we have the certainty of broad circulation in Mexico, not only among the Franciscans but also among other religious orders, is Saint Bonaventure's *Teología mística*.[75] This work was printed in Mexico three times during the 16th century (in 1549, 1575 and 1594). It offers a brief introduction to the three classical ways of reaching a mystical experience of God: purgative, illuminative, and unitive.[76] The first edition was published by the Dominicans, a fact which indicates the importance of mystical practices in New Spain. An anonymous Dominican wrote in the introduction:

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[70] "[Honeste se debent habere ut dum comedunt quarumdam anhelationum] vel labiorum tumultum vitent…Oculos a circumspectione, cohibeant…[Quod manuali opera corporaliter exercetur servandam necessaria est] discretio, diligencia et honestas…[Disciplinam circa incessum, penes modum in ambulando considerent. Honestus enim modus requiret] ut non impetuosis et fractis gressibus ambulent" (Bonaventure, "Speculum disciplinae ad novitios," Part 1, chs 21–23, in *Opera omnia Sancti Bonaventura*, 15 vols [Paris, 1864–71], Vol. 12 [Paris, 1868], pp. 470, 472, 474). This multi-volume set will be cited hereafter as Bonaventure, *Opera omnia*.

[71] Bonaventure, *Opera omnia*, Vol. 12, chs 21–23.

[72] Bonaventure, *Opera omnia*, Vol. 12, chs 1 and 3.

[73] *In hoc volumine beati Bonauenture subiecta comprehenduntur…de profectu religiosorum*…(Paris, 1517). Hereafter cited as Bonaventure, *De profectu religiosorum*.

[74] Bonaventure, *De profectu religiosorum*, ch. 75.

[75] *Compilación breve de un tratado de sant Buenaventura que se llama mística teología* (Mexico, 1549).

[76] Bonaventure, *Opera omnia*, 8: 1–53.

> Since this treatise, drawn in Romance language from a mystical theology which the seraphic Bonaventure wrote, is so admirable for the religious who would like to devote themselves to the spiritual life, it has been printed by the endeavor of the religious of the order of preachers [Dominicans] of New Spain for the glory of God and benefit of His servants.[77]

The second edition (1575) indicates a wider range of readers: "It is so admirable for the religious *and other people*, who would like to devote themselves to the spiritual life", the prologue reads.[78]

Another inspirational source for mystical practices in 16th-century New Spain was hagiography, especially written about Saint Francis. Its use by the Franciscans has a remarkable testimony. A copy of the *Floreto de San Francisco*, printed in Seville in 1492, bears on one of its pages important evidence of its use in the early friaries of Mexico.[79] The copy might have arrived in Mexico in 1524 with one of the first "Twelve Franciscans", since on its last page there is a hand-written list of novices who took the Franciscan habit between 1515 and 1521, very likely in the Province of Saint Gabriel. On the back of this page is the following annotation:

> Year of 1557, in the month of April, on the 17th day, at eight o'clock at night of the Easter vespers, there was an earthquake which lasted over four "I believe in God's". It was very strong, and it was God's will that no damage happen to the City of Mexico.[80]

The 150 chapters of this book include several narratives on the miracles and revelations of Saint Francis, as well as numerous "fechos maravillosos" of his companions, and 19 *exempla* on some other friars close to Saint Francis. If (as the hand-written annotations of this book

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[77] "Porque este tratado sacado en romance de una mística teología que escribió el seráfico Buenaventura es tan admirable para los religiosos que se quisieran ejercitar en la vida espiritual fue impreso para gloria de Jesucristo y para provecho de sus siervos, por industria de los religiosos de la orden de predicadores desta Nueva España" (quoted in Joaquín García Icazbalceta, *Bibliografía mexicana del siglo XVI* [Mexico, 1954], p. 86).

[78] "es tan admirable para los religiosos *y otras personas* que se quieran ejercitar en la vida espiritual" (García Icazbalceta, *Bibliografía mexicana*, p. 272). Emphasis mine.

[79] Sofronius Classen, "El Floreto de San Francisco," *Collectanea franciscana* 35 (1965): 248–66.

[80] "Año de 1557, en el mes de abril a 17 días sábado a las ocho de la noche vísperas de Pasqua, tembló la tierra, bien por espacio de quatro credos y muy rezio; plugo a nuestro Señor que no hizo daño ninguno en esta ciudad de Mexico" (Classen, "El Floreto de San Francisco," p. 250).

indicate) its owner was master of novices, one must not be surprised at the penchant of the first missionaries for supernatural events.

Another Saint Francis biography, certainly briefer than the *Floreto* but more meaningful for our study, is the *Leyenda minor* of Saint Francis recorded by Saint Bonaventure, a work written for the purpose of being read at matins (early morning office) during the eight days following Saint Francis's feast day (October 4th). The importance of this hagiographical text is based on the fact that it was not just the first and only hagiographical text printed in Mexico during the 16th century, but also it was addressed to the Nahua Christian people since it was published in Nahuatl.[81] As far as I know, this is the first printed text in a vernacular language of the *Leyenda minor*. The life of prayer and spirit of prophecy illustrated by Saint Francis in chapter four of this work open multiple opportunities for scholars to study aspects of Nahua-Christian mysticism.[82] The same opportunity can be found in the *Flos sanctorum*, translated into Nahuatl by the Franciscan Juan Bautista, which was ready for printing by the beginning of the 17th century.[83]

We have documentation on the circulation of two other important books which played a significant part in the spiritual formation of the 16th-century Franciscans of Mexico: the *De conformitate vitae b. Francisci ad vitam Domini Ihesu* by Bartholomaeus of Pisa and the *Arbor vitae crucifixus Iesu* by Ubertino de Casale. On the first one, Francisco Jiménez writes in his biography of Martín de Valencia:

> It seems to me that I heard from him [Martin of Valencia] or from somebody else, that he received the habit in the town of Mayorga, which belongs to the [Franciscan] province of Santiago; and when he was a novice he read the book on "Conformidades" of our father, Saint Francis, and that such reading much enlightened him and [thus] he began to know the virtue of poverty.[84]

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[81] *Nican moteneua yn nemilitzin yn totlacotatzin sant Francisco* (Mexico, 1577). Hereafter cited as *Nican moteneua*.

[82] *Nican moteneua*, fol. 16b.

[83] García Icazbalceta, *Bibliografía mexicana*, p. 475.

[84] "Paréceme que a él [fray Martín de Valencia] y no se a quien, oí que recibió el hábito en la villa de Mayorga, que es provincia de Santiago, y que siendo novicio, *leyó el libro de las Conformidades* de nuestro padre san Francisco, en cuya leyenda fue alumbrado mucho y comenzó a conocer la virtud de la pobreza" (Jiménez, "Vida de fray Martín de Valencia," p. 225). Emphasis mine.

The *De conformitate vitae*, written by Bartholomaeus of Pisa (1338–1401), has as its principal theme a comparison of the life of Saint Francis with the life of Jesus Christ.[85] The most remarkable characteristic of this comparison is the free use and interpretation of Holy Scripture. Bartholomaeus chooses 63 texts of the Old Testament and applies them to the life of Christ. Some of them certainly are classical interpretations already used by the evangelists of the New Testament; others, however, were applied at the discretion of the author.[86] This particular way of using Holy Scripture is (to our surprise) also used in the life of Saint Francis. As one might expect, the application of Holy Scripture in these cases is totally figurative. For example, Bartholomaeus explains that the text of Genesis 37:15, on the visit of Joseph to his brothers, was an anticipated figure of the coming of Saint Francis to the world; and that the story in Genesis 21:6–8, on the happiness of Abraham and Sara for the announcement of Isaac's birth, was an anticipated figure of medieval Christians' happiness at Saint Francis' birth.[87] Even more interesting is the list of prophets who—according to Bartholomaeus—prophesy about Saint Francis' life. Among others, he mentions Joachim of Fiore, who (Bartholomaeus says) made reference to Saint Francis in the prophecy of Ciryl the presbyter, a hermit of Mount Carmel.[88]

The second book, the *Arbor vitae crucifixae Iesu Christi*, is even more noteworthy.[89] This work was a classic for the spiritual Franciscans of the 13th and 14th centuries. Its author, Ubertinus of Casale (1259–1329), was one of the most controversial Franciscans to participate in discussions on the *usus pauper*. His defense of this topic caused him to end up getting thrown out of the Franciscan order and, by mandate of Pope John XXIII, being exiled to the Benedictine mon-

[85] *De conformitate beati Francisci ad vitam Domini Jesu autore Bartolome de Pisa*, vols 4–5 of *Analecta franciscana* (Quaracchi, Italy, 1906–12).

[86] For example, Bartholomaeus sees in Zachariah 3:1—"Et ostendit mihi Dominus Iesum sacerdotem magnum, stantem coram angelo Domini, et Satan stabat a dextris eius ut adversaretur ei" ("Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him")—the prefiguration of Christ's temptations (*De conformitate*, 4: 26).

[87] Bartholomaeus, *De conformitate*, 4: 34.

[88] Bartholomaeus, *De conformitate*, 4: 44.

[89] Ubertino de Casale, *Arbor vitae crucifixae Jesu Christi fratris Ubertini de Casali ordinis fratrum minorum* (Venice, 1485).

astery of Gembloux, where he died.[90] Recent studies on his thought have opened up new ways of approaching the mystical practices and ecclesiological ideas of the first Franciscans in New Spain. The topic of a "poor church" in the New World ruled by bishops of the religious orders, the idea of an Indian church with a different organization from that of Spain, and notable devotions to the Holy Cross (as well as to the passion of Christ and its dramatization) have strong links with Ubertino of Casale's thinking.[91] A copy of this work, printed in Venice in 1485, formed a part of the library of the College of Propaganda Fide in Mexico City.[92] This friary was founded in 1741, but it is very unlikely that the friars bought the book at such a late date. More reasonably, this book had pertained previously to one of the oldest friaries of Mexico City. In any case, this copy proves that the ideas of Ubertinus were not unknown in colonial Mexico.

From the *Devotio Moderna* to Franciscan Humanism

The 16th-century Franciscans of Mexico are a singular testament to the close relationship between the *devotio moderna* and humanism. The love of the early Franciscans in New Spain for the classical works of the *devotio moderna* finds various manifestations, among which the most remarkable is the translation into Nahuatl of some of these texts—a fact which strengthens the idea that the friars deliberately tried to introduce mystical practices into Nahuatl Christianity.

The well-known "Relación particular y descripción de toda la Provincia del Santo Evangelio", sent by the Franciscans to Spain in 1569, includes the following information on Nahuatl translations done by Alonso de Molina: "he has worked for many years on the translation into Nahuatl of some *books necessary for the learning of*

[90] Cf. Carlos M. Martínez Ruiz, *De la dramatización de los acontecimientos de la Pascua a la Cristología: el cuarto libro del* Arbor vitae crucifixae Iesu *de Ubertino de Casale* (Rome, 2000); and Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans*.

[91] Cf. Francisco Morales, "Felipe II y órdenes religiosas: iglesia mendicante contra iglesia beneficial (discusiones de los franciscanos en torno a la real cédula del Patronato de 1574)," in *Felipe II y el oficio de rey: la fragua de un imperio* (Madrid, 2001), pp. 681–705; and Francisco Morales, "The Native Encounter with Christianity: Franciscans and Nahuas in Sixteenth-Century Mexico," *The Americas* (October 2008): 137–57.

[92] Ubertino de Casale, *Arbor vitae crucifixae Jesu Christi* (Venice, 1485). Biblioteca Nacional de México (Mexico City), shelf mark 1485-3-12 UBE.a.

any Christian nation".[93] The *Contemptus mundi* is one of the books mentioned in the "Relación".[94] By the end of the 16th century, Jerónimo of Mendieta adds that two other Franciscans participated in this translation: Luis Rodríguez and Juan Bautista, the latter as translator of the last 20 chapters of the third book and unfortunate editor of this work which was never printed. This manuscript has survived in the Real Biblioteca del Escorial.[95]

Another classical work of early modern Spanish mysticism translated into Nahuatl was the *Libro de la vanidad del mundo* by the renowned Franciscan Diego de Estella. This translation was never printed. What we know about it comes from the information provided by his translator Juan Bautista.[96] A work which indeed was printed and gives ample opportunity to measure the influence of Franciscan mysticism in the Nahua world is *Colloquios de la paz y tranquilidad christiana en lengua mexicana*, by Juan de Gaona.[97] The great Nahuatl literature expert Ángel María Garibay presents a brief summary of this work. Gaona, Garibay writes, explains how true peace is found in the conquest of the inner life, and how the soul of the righteous is like a pleasurable garden where God enjoys Himself, and how the variety of knowledge is like a wide variety of fruits in the garden.[98]

Thanks to the recent publications of the Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, we now have the opportunity to evaluate efforts by Franciscans to express with the Nahua language important concepts of western Christian mysticism. For example, Bernardino of Sahagún translates "charity" with the Nahuatl neologism *teutlatlazolistli*, literally "love of God".[99] The

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[93] "ha trabajado muchos años en traducir a dicha lengua [náhuatl] algunos libros que son necesarios *para la erudición de cualquier nación cristiana*" ("Relación particular y descripción de toda la Provincia del Santo Evangelio," in *Códice Franciscano*, ed. Joaquín García Icazbalceta, 2nd ed. [Mexico, 1941], p. 60). Emphasis mine.

[94] *Contemptus mundi* is the subtitle of the first chapter of the first book of the *Imitatio Christi* by Thomas à Kempis: *Opera Thomae a Campis, cognomento Malleoli* (Paris, 1549), p. 1.

[95] Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, Book 4, ch. 44, 2: 239; Escorial d. IV. 7.

[96] Juan Bautista, *Sermonario en lengua mexicana* (Mexico, 1606). Quoted in García Icazbalceta, *Bibliografía mexicana del siglo XVI*, p. 475.

[97] Juan de Gaona, *Colloquios de la paz y tranquilidad christiana en lengua mexicana* (Mexico, 1582).

[98] Ángel María Garibay, *Historia de la literatura náhuatl*, 3rd ed., 2 vols (Mexico, 1987), 2: 191.

[99] Bernardino de Sahagún, *Adiciones, apéndice a la postilla y ejercicio cotidiano*, ed. and trans. Arthur J. O. Anderson (Mexico, 1993), p. 6.

same editorial projects from the National University of Mexico have made it possible to begin to explore the relationship of pre-Christian Nahua literature with Christian Nahua literature. The well-known *Huehuetlatolli* (the ancient word), which was the source of wisdom and virtues for the native American, was taken by the Franciscans to express theological concepts from Christian culture.[100] See, for example, the following paragraph of Sahagún's work *Adiciones, apéndice a la postilla y ejercicio cotidiano*:

> Here begins the sixth admonition in which our mother the Holy Roman Church admonishes young people on how they have to live with external prudence. *It has been taken from the admonitions with which old people used to admonish their young people on how to live openly with prudence.*[101]

A final word on the desire of 16th-century Franciscans to bring Holy Scripture closer to the Nahua community as a means of building solid bases for native mysticism: the Franciscans manifested in several ways their interest in translating Holy Scripture into native languages. Such an interest has its roots in pre-Reform currents, in which Erasmus of Rotterdam played a significant role. Erasmus's ideas arrived in New Spain through the first Archbishop of Mexico, the Franciscan Juan de Zumárraga. A brief memorial of his library points out that among other books, he had "fourteen books with the works of Erasmus".[102] Among these I have been able to identify two related to Holy Scripture: *Paraphrasis D. Erasmo Roterdami in omnes epistolas apostolicas*... (Antwerp, 1540) and *In Evangelium Lucae paraphrasis*... (Basel, 1526). A third work, *Paraphrasis D. Erasmo in libros elegantiarum Laure. Vallae*... (Lyon, 1531), reveals Zumárraga's sympathy for the Renaissance.[103]

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[100] Cf. Miguel León-Portilla and Librado Silva Galeana, *Testimonios de la antigua palabra* (Mexico, 1988), pp. 28–33 and 37–41.

[101] "Aquí empieza la sexta amonestación en la cual nuestra madre la Santa Iglesia Romana amonesta a los jóvenes cómo han de vivir con externa prudencia. *Se ha tomado de las amonestaciones con las cuales los ancianos amonestaban a sus jóvenes acerca del vivir públicamente con prudencia*" (Sahagún, *Adiciones*, p. 105). Emphasis mine.

[102] Richard Greenleaf, ed., *Zumárraga and His Family: Letters to Viscaya* (Washington, D.C., 1979), p. 128.

[103] Greenleaf, ed., *Zumárraga and His Family*, pp. 122–26.

The best claim for the natives' rights to have access to Holy Scripture in their language is found in the *Doctrina breve* by Zumárraga. He says:

> I do not share the opinion of those who say that simple people must not read the Holy Scripture in their own language, since what Jesus Christ wants is a wider divulgation of His mysteries. I would be glad if any woman could read the Gospels. I say even more: God would be pleased if the Holy Scripture were translated into the language of every one so that not only the Indians, but even other uncivilized people could read and understand it.[104]

When in 1572 the Mexican Inquisition asked the Franciscan Alonso Molina if the natives of Mexico should be prohibited from having "any printed or manuscript material translated in their language, considering their low intelligence", the Franciscan answered:

> My opinion is that they [the natives of Mexico] must enjoy, like any Christian, [the reading of] Holy Scripture and that other devotional books, printed or manuscript, should not be taken away from them, since many of these natives generally have great capacity and intelligence, and there are many of them [who have] great intelligence and abilities and are good Christians, and it is not right that they should be deprived of the great benefit which the devotional books give them, providing them great spiritual consolation for their souls and their salvation.[105]

Concluding Words

The Christianization of the Nahua communities of central Mexico has been the subject of various interpretations. In recent times there

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[104] "No comparto la opinión de aquellos que dicen que la gente sencilla no debe leer la Sagrada Escritura en su lengua, pues lo que Jesucristo quiere es la más amplia divulgación de sus misterios y me alegraría si cada mujer pudiese leer los evangelios. Digo todavía más: agradaría a Dios que ellas [las Sagradas Escrituras] fueran traducidas a todas las lenguas de todos los pueblos, para que no sólo los indios, pero aun los otros pueblos bárbaros puedan leerlas y comprenderlas" (Juan de Zumárraga, *Doctrina breve muy provechosa de las cosas que pertenecen a la fe católica* [Mexico, 1543]). Quoted in García Icazbalceta, *Don fray Juan de Zumárraga*, p. 255.

[105] "Me parece que deben gozar de ella [Sagrada Escritura] como los demás cristianos y que no se les quiten los demás libros devotos, impresos o escritos a mano, porque aunque sea así que estos naturales generalmente sean de mucha capacidad e ingenio, hay muchos de ellos de muy buen entendimiento, hábiles y muy buenos cristianos y no es justo que sean privados de tan gran favor que con los dichos libros devotos tienen para consolación espiritual de sus almas y salvación de ella" (Garibay, *Historia de la literatura nahua*, 2: 177).

has been a tendency to emphasize the hidden resistance of the Nahua communities, or the so-called "epistemic violence" of the Franciscan missionaries during the evangelization process.[106] A glance through the Franciscan texts and manuscripts dealing with evangelization efforts shows that it is difficult to dismiss as violent or superficial a process characterized by a determined effort to introduce the Nahua community to the highest point of religious practice, which is also—at least in this case—mystical practice. I believe that what the evangelization texts really show is the need for a deeper study of Nahua Christian literature.

[106] See for example Vivivana Díaz Balsera, *The Pyramid Under the Cross: Franciscan Discourses of Evangelization and the Nahua Christian Subject in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Tucson, 2005), pp. 39 and 205.

THE *ALUMBRADOS: DEJAMIENTO* AND ITS PRACTITIONERS

Alastair Hamilton

Historians of the heretical movements of the past have nearly always had to struggle with terminology. The heretic hunters at the time tended to choose names which none of the accused would have acknowledged. Later heretic hunters liked to see a continuity in heterodoxy and gave the same names to very different movements. The term *alumbrado*, "enlightened", came into currency with an edict of faith issued in September 1525. A word devised by their enemies, none of the accused ever said it of themselves. Within a few years it was being bestowed on a thoroughly heterogeneous group of men and women suspected of various kinds of heresy, and it would remain in use for nearly two centuries to come. Yet the same edict of faith added other terms. It condemned 48 propositions attributed to persons "who called themselves enlightened, abandoned and perfect" (*alumbrados, dexados e perfectos*). However broad the meaning of *alumbrado* might become, the name *dejado* designated a specific group of individuals who were fully prepared to accept it. Although I shall occasionally use *alumbrado* in the broad sense in which the Inquisitors applied it in the 1520s and 1530s, it is the *dejados* who will be the subject of this article.

The Teaching

In the course of 1524 the Inquisition of Toledo arrested three of the leading *dejados* and drew up edicts of grace which would lead to the edict of faith of 23 September 1525.[1] This introduced what seemed to be a new heresy. The condemned propositions included the denial of

[1] The only surviving version is the one issued on 23 September 1525 by Inquisitor General Alonso Manrique, Archbishop of Seville. Originally published by Vicente Beltrán de Heredia, "El edicto contra los alumbrados del reino de Toledo (23 septiembre de 1525)," *Revista española de teología* 10 (1950): 105–30, it has been reprinted in Antonio Márquez, *Los alumbrados, orígenes y filosofía 1525–1559* (Madrid, 1972), pp. 273–83.

eternal punishment or the need for repentance, as well as expressions of contempt for the benefit of good works, the authority of the saints and the clergy, sacred images, and papal bulls. The statements have a familiar ring. The countless admirers of Erasmus would have agreed with many of them, as would readers of early Protestants. They had been uttered as the ground was being prepared, throughout Europe, for a reform not only of certain religious orders, but of the church itself.[2]

Yet the *dejados* were also accused of certain tenets which had a flavor of their own. They stressed the superiority of mental over oral prayer. They believed in their own perfection or divinity. One statement condemned in the edict was "that the love of God in man is God" and that "to this love of God, which affects people in such a manner that they can sin neither mortally nor venially, they should abandon themselves."[3] Judging from the edict, this essentially theocentric form of abandonment, to which the heresy owed its name, precluded any form of activity. The mind was to be cleared of all thoughts or memories. "In the state of *dejamiento*," ran the 12th proposition, "they should not act, in order not to hinder what God wished to perform"; "they should not think of any created things"; "even to think of the humanity of Christ impeded abandonment to God"; and "they should reject all thoughts which presented themselves, even if they were good, since they should search for God alone." "The labour involved in rejecting such thoughts," the proposition continued, "was meritorious"; and, for those "in that state of quiet…it was a temptation even to remember God."[4]

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[2] For a survey, see George Huntston Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 3rd ed. (Kirkville, 1992), pp. 85–136; and Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House Divided, 1490–1700* (London, 2003), pp. 88–105, 137–57.

[3] "Que el amor de dios en el hombre es dios y que se dexassen a este amor de dios que ordena las personas de tal manera que no pueden peccar mortal ni venialmente y que no ay culpas veniales y que si alguna cosa paresciere liviana seran culpas sin culpa y que llegando a este estado no ay mas que merescer" (Márquez, *Alumbrados*, p. 276).

[4] "Que estando en el dexamiento no avian de obrar porque no pusiessen obstaculo a lo que dios quisiesse obrar y que se desocupassen de todas las cosas criadas e que aun pensar en la humanidad de Xristo estorvaba el dexamiento en Dios e que desechassen todos los pensamientos que se les ofreciessen aunque fuesen buenos porque a solo dios debian buscar e que era merito el trabaxo que en desechar los tales pensamientos se tenia y que estando en aquella quietud por no distraerse tenia por tentación acordarse de dios" (Márquez, *Alumbrados*, p. 276).

The "state of quiet" which the *dejados* claimed to attain is a recurrent phenomenon in the history of mysticism. But how was it to be reached? Was it to be arrived at gradually and laboriously, or were the *dejados* suggesting that anyone could reach it effortlessly, in a single bound? Both Pedro Ruiz de Alcaraz and Isabel de la Cruz, the first leaders of the movement, assured the Inquisitors that their method was entirely traditional. Alcaraz referred to the standard mystical steps, the *via purgativa*, in which practitioners became aware of their own sinfulness; the *via illuminativa*, in which they felt God's mercy; and the *via unitiva*, in which they were united with the deity.[5] Isabel de la Cruz insisted on the progressive nature of *dejamiento*. She said that she counselled beginners to discipline themselves, to fast, to pray and to meditate on the passion of Christ. The final stage was reserved for those who had attained a high degree of virtue and who could remain "forever suspended in the desire and love of God."[6] The asceticism for which the early *dejados* were renowned gave substance to their arguments.

When the *dejados* replied to the accusations, another feature of their teaching emerged: their conception of themselves as men and women of the "spirit", unlearned but divinely inspired, and consequently endowed with a greater capacity of understanding the Scriptures than trained theologians. They supported their views with references to the Bible which, they claimed, should be read by their disciples—but in a

[5] "mas myrando que leydo en dotrinas santas de los modos del seguimiento de la vida espiritual, y de los tres estados que en esta vida el anyma se exerçita que el uno es de los principiantes que es la via purgativa en que habla en el conosçimiento y contriçion de nuestros pecados y en la confesion dellos, y el segundo que es la via iluminativa habla en el consçimiento de los benefiçios de dios asy de la creaçion come de la rredençion y en este pone ser buena la leçion y meditaçion de la pasion de nuestro rredentor, y el tercero que es el mas perfecto habla en la union del anyma con dios" (Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Inquisición de Toledo, Leg. 106, no. 5, Proceso de Pedro Ruiz de Alcaraz, fol. 32r). Hereafter cited as Proceso de Alcaraz.

[6] "a los principiantes los industriava e consejava que se diesen a disçiplinas e ayunos e oraçiones e a pensar en la pasion de dios y en los benefiçios que del avian resçibido e que para esto les dava esta confesante libros en que leyesen e disçiplinas con que se disçiplinasen y a los que estavan ynstrutos les dezia que no se curasen ya de aquellas cosas que eran baxas sino quando sintiesen alguna repunançia syno que procurasen de estar siempre suspensos en el deseo y amor de dios y que para esto que se diesen unos a otros e se atraxiesen e no se acovardasen en aconsejar e obrar todas las cosas en que creyesen que podian aprovechar a sus proximos para llegar al alteza del amor de dios porque las otras cosas e obras exteriores eran rastreras e baxas asi como mirar las ymagines herirse en los pechos apartarse en los rincones e hazer otras umiliaçiones corporales" (Proceso de Alcaraz, fol. 115v).

spirit of humility. Alcaraz, as well as one of his followers, Rodrigo de Bivar, quoted John 3:8, *Spiritus ubi vult spirat* ("The Spirit breatheth where he will"), to show how arbitrary was the distribution of God's love.[7] One of Isabel de la Cruz's favorite quotations was Matthew 11:25, "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them to little ones".[8] She paraphrased 1 John 3:9: "Whosoever is born of God committeth not sin: for his seed abideth in him. And he cannot sin, because he is born of God."[9] Alcaraz also quoted 1 Corinthians 2:15, "But the spiritual man judgeth all things: and he himself is judged of no man";[10] 1 Thessalonians 5:19, "Extinguish not the spirit";[11] and, above all, 1 John 4:16, "And we have known and have believed the charity which God hath to us. God is charity: and he that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him."[12]

Dejamiento was often contrasted with another mystical system, *recogimiento*, or the "gathering [of the senses]", an orthodox method that can be traced back to the Franciscan reformers of the 1480s and which was described in detail in the early 16th century by Francisco de Osuna.[13] Both methods were conceived in the enthusiasm of the reform of the Franciscan Order, encouraged in the early 16th century by the great Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros, Archbishop of Toledo and primate of Spain. It was a time when mysticism, regarded as an *atajo e arte de amar a Dios* ("a shortcut and art of loving God", as an anonymous Franciscan entitled his tract in 1513), was widely promoted and numerous translations into Castilian of earlier mystical texts were being published under Cisneros's patronage.[14] Nor was *recogimiento* only to be practiced in the convents, but "sufficient rules"

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[7] Proceso de Alcaraz, fol. 5v; Alastair Hamilton, ed., *Proceso de Rodrigo de Bivar (1539)* (Madrid, 1979), p. 61. Biblical quotations are from the Douay version (*The Holy Bible, Translated from the Latin Vulgate*, ed. Richard Challoner [New York, 1941]).

[8] Proceso de Alcaraz, fols 7r, 56r.

[9] Proceso de Alcaraz, fol. 112r.

[10] Proceso de Alcaraz, fol. 7r.

[11] Proceso de Alcaraz, fol. 7r.

[12] Proceso de Alcaraz, fol. 57v.

[13] Francisco de Osuna, *Tercer abecedario espiritual*, ed. Melquíades Andrés Martín (Madrid, 1972). On *recogimiento* in general see Melquíades Andrés Martín, *Los recogidos: nueva visión de la mística española (1500–1700)* (Madrid, 1975), pp. 21–275. Cf. Alastair Hamilton, "A Recent Study in Spanish Mysticism," *The Heythrop Journal* 18 (1977): 191–99.

[14] Andrés Martín, *Los recogidos*, pp. 64–70.

were also to be offered to the laity, enabling "a man to change from carnal to spiritual."[15]

The orthodox method of *recogimiento* involved a regular activity. Systematically, at certain times of day—for example, an hour before and an hour after mass—the *recogidos* might kneel for a while and then sit in a corner with their eyes closed. The method would lead through the three mystical stages. Some *recogidos* described the last stage, the *via unitiva*, as one of suspension in which all thoughts were cast away, even virtuous ones,[16] and as placing the soul in a state of quiet until "it recalled neither itself nor God."[17]

Dejamiento, on the other hand, required no particular time or place. *Dejados* did not have to sit in a corner and close their eyes, but simply to submit themselves to God with no further effort. *Dejamiento* could be practiced anywhere, at any time, and by all people "continuously", as Isabel de la Cruz and Alcaraz maintained: "wherever or however one liked, even while trading, and . . . nothing could impede it." Alcaraz himself was frequently engaged in business "in the market-place" and prayed, or abandoned himself to God, just as "peasants and carpenters prayed as they worked."[18]

The similarities between the two methods are obvious, and the borders between them are by no means always clear in the proceedings of the *alumbrado* trials. They were, after all, derived from the same sources and often practised in the same places. Alcaraz, when asked to define them, replied piously that both *recogimiento* and *dejamiento* had the same meaning—a desire not to offend God, to refrain from vices, to avoid the vanities of this world, and to keep the commandments of God and the church.[19] There were moments, moreover, when the *recogidos* appreciated the spirituality of Alcaraz. Fray Francisco de Ocaña, with whom Alcaraz would subsequently quarrel, had said that he agreed with his teaching on love, on the superiority of the spirit over the letter, and on the importance of denying one's own will;[20]

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[15] Bernabé de Palma, *Tratado llamado Via Espiritus* (Salamanca, 1541), fol. 2v.

[16] Angela Selke, *El Santo Oficio de la Inquisición: proceso de Fr. Francisco Ortiz (1529–1532)* (Madrid, 1968), pp. 246–49.

[17] Selke, *El Santo Oficio*, p. 232.

[18] Proceso de Alcaraz, fols 57v, 77r.

[19] Proceso de Alcaraz, fol. 39r.

[20] Proceso de Alcaraz, fols 63r, 68v.

while another *recogido*, Fray Francisco Ortiz, was at first impressed by the leading *dejado* and sought his friendship.[21]

But even if the *dejados* never appear to have had any objection to the actual practice of *recogimiento*, they objected strongly to the excesses of certain Franciscans who did practise it. They were shocked by the spectacular trances and ecstasies, sometimes attended by prophecies, which drew hundreds of spectators to the Franciscan convents and it was their determination to denounce them which finally drove the Franciscan superiors to consult the Holy Office about the *dejados'* own behaviour.[22]

The Practitioners

The spread of *dejamiento* was attributed to Isabel de la Cruz, a *beata* of *converso* origin, who had left her family to preach in the area of Guadalajara in, or shortly before, 1512.[23] A Franciscan tertiary, she always claimed to have developed her ideas in the local Franciscan convents or *recolectorios* especially founded for the practice of *recogimiento*. It was in the convent of Cifuentes and the town of Pastrana that she made many of her converts. Most of her trial has been lost. The little we know about her comes from the trials of her followers, most particularly from that of her principal acolyte Pedro Ruiz de Alcaraz.[24]

Alcaraz, too, was a *converso*. His grandfather had been a scribe and his father a bread merchant. He was brought up in Guadalajara in the household of Don Pedro Hurtado de Mendoza, the *adelantado*

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[21] Proceso de Alcaraz, fol. 278v.

[22] Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism in Sixteenth-Century Spain: The* Alumbrados (Toronto, 1992), pp. 32–34, 57–60.

[23] Proceso de Alcaraz, fol. 367r. The date is approximate and is based on a single statement extracted from Alcaraz under torture on 19 July 1527: "dixo que Ysabel de la Cruz le hablo sobre las cosas que dizen, e que nos las conoscio por errores e que avra mas de quinze años que le dixo estas cosas." The suggestion by Carlos Gilly, "Juan de Valdés: Übersetzer und Bearbeiter von Luthers Schriften in seinem *Diálogo de Doctrina*," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 74 (1983), pp. 257–305, especially pp. 296–97, that Alcaraz, with his mouth full of water, may actually have said "cinco" rather than "quince" is, to my mind, unacceptable. José C. Nieto's decision to date the beginning of Isabel de la Cruz's proselytism in 1509 or 1510 would also seem to result from one of a number of misreadings of a document with which Nieto had little familiarity. See José C. Nieto, ed., *Valdés' Two Catechisms: The* Dialogue on Christian Doctrine *and the* Christian Instruction for Children, 2nd ed. (Lawrence, 1998), pp. 68–69.

[24] See John E. Longhurst, "La beata Isabel de la Cruz ante la Inquisición," *Cuadernos de historia de España* 25–6 (1957): 279–303.

of Cazorla, son of the marquess of Santillana and brother of the first duke of Infantado. Alcaraz subsequently worked for Don Pedro's son-in-law, Don Diego Carrillo de Mendoza, third count of Priego, and then for Don Diego's son and heir Don Luis. He was employed as an accountant. At the death of Don Luis he entered the service of Don Benito Cisneros, the cardinal's nephew. After a brief period spent in Madrid, he returned to Guadalajara. Married and the father of a number of children, he had acquired a high reputation for piety and asceticism, and was invited by Don Diego López Pacheco, the second marquess of Villena, to join him in his castle at Escalona, close to Toledo, to see to his accounts and to act as a lay preacher.[25]

The third of the early *dejados* had still wider contacts and more illustrious connections. María de Cazalla, like Isabel de la Cruz and Alcaraz, came from a *converso* family, but, the daughter of a merchant, she was born in the south, in Palma del Río in Andalusia. One of her brothers, Juan de Cazalla, became a Franciscan and was appointed chaplain to Cardinal Cisneros before being created titular bishop of Verissa, visitor of the archbishopric of Toledo and coadjutor of the bishop of Ávila. María married a rich merchant from Guadalajara, where she made the acquaintance of the family of the duke of Infantado. She became a particular friend of the duke's illegitimate daughter Doña Brianda de Mendoza, of his daughter-in-law the countess of Saldaña, and of the duke of Medinaceli's bastard brother Don Alonso de la Cerda and his wife. Through her brother, she encountered scholars such as Bernardino de Tovar at the nearby university of Alcalá, recently founded by Cardinal Cisneros and regarded as the centre of Spanish humanism.[26]

The identity of the principal *dejados* already does much to explain the preoccupations of the Inquisition. As *conversos*, they were naturally suspected of judaizing. Their connections with the Franciscans meant that they were close to an order (that of Cardinal Cisneros himself) which had long been in the throes of reform.[27] The mystical tradition of the Friars Minor, moreover, had frequently come under

[25] Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism*, pp. 26, 136.

[26] Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism*, pp. 27, 136; and, above all, Milagros Ortega Costa, ed., *Proceso de la Inquisición contra María de Cazalla* (Madrid, 1978), pp. 37, 95, 101–03, 122–23.

[27] See José García Oro, *Cisneros y la reforma del clero español en tiempo de los Reyes Católicos* (Madrid, 1971).

suspicion as heretical. María de Cazalla's acquaintances, too, were part of a world which met with increasing hostility in the conservative circles in which many employees of the Holy Office were recruited. She was connected with the court and the universities, at which the works of Erasmus would be read with veneration and where the writings of Luther would circulate freely.[28]

If the ideas of the *dejados* were first disseminated shortly before 1512, they proselytized with impunity for over seven years. It was not until 1519 that the first denunciations were made to the Holy Office. The nature and circumstances of the charges suggested that the Inquisitors were simply dealing with the resentment and jealousy of rival *beatas* vying for influence in the great households of Guadalajara. The somewhat disreputable Marí Núñez was losing her hold over the retinue of Alcaraz's employer, the count of Priego, and, together with two even less reputable accomplices, she denounced to the tribunal of Toledo Isabel de la Cruz, Alcaraz and María de Cazalla. In the meantime Alcaraz, too, had called on the authorities—on the vicar of Alcalá rather than on the Inquisition—to inform them about Marí Núñez's malpractices.[29]

Marí Núñez supplied the Inquisitors with many of the propositions which would be condemned in the edict of 1525.[30] The similarity of later accusations to the original ones suggests that, by 1519, the teaching of the *dejados* had been fully elaborated. Marí Núñez accused both Isabel de la Cruz and Alcaraz of denying the existence of hell and of mocking those who repented of their sins. She charged Alcaraz with saying that he wished he had sinned more, since God loved those to whom more must be forgiven. Other witnesses accused Alcaraz of dismissing ceremonies and fasts as *ataduras* or "bonds". Both Isabel de la Cruz and María de Cazalla, it was alleged, had feasted instead of fasting on Maundy Thursday.

Feasting on Maundy Thursday, the denial of hell, and contempt for the ceremonies of the church were common charges against judaizers

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[28] For a masterly survey of the spiritual climate in Spain at the time see Eugenio Asensio, "El Erasmismo y las corrientes espirituales afines," *Revista de filología española* 36 (1952): 31–99.

[29] Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism*, p. 52.

[30] For an attribution of the condemned propositions to the various defendants and an identification of their accusers, see Milagros Ortega Costa, "Las proposiciones del edicto de los alumbrados: autores y calificadores," *Cuadernos de investigación histórica* 1 (1977): 23–36.

at the time and Marí Núñez reminded the Inquisitors that her three enemies were *conversos*. The tribunal consequently dispatched a representative to Guadalajara. Alcaraz was questioned. Nevertheless, the investigation seems to have been entirely abandoned in the spring of 1520. This may have been because of the *comuneros*' revolt, but it was probably also because the accused had well-placed protectors, and the Inquisitors had doubts about the validity of the accusations.[31]

In the early 1520s Isabel de la Cruz and her followers broadened their field of proselytization. Isabel de la Cruz and María de Cazalla converted ever more friars and laymen in Cifuentes and Pastrana. In Guadalajara they drew servants of the Infantado household—members of the duke's guard, players in his orchestra, the wife and daughter of the duchess's treasurer, the steward of the duke's eldest son, not to mention Alcaraz's own brother and nephew. Alcaraz too made converts. In Escalona his admirers included not only the local *alcalde*, the learned Antonio de Baeza and his family, but numerous members of the marquess's household—the maids of the marchioness, the marquess's chaplain Sebastián Gutiérrez, and the marquess's pages: Noguerol, Pedro de Marquina and Juan de Valdés.

A list of "*alumbrado* correspondents" submitted to the Inquisition in 1527 gives an idea of the social categories of those involved in the movement. Out of 46 names, 11 were friars, at least 5 ordained priests, and 13 women.[32] The proportion of women, educated or semi-educated, was to remain one of the most striking features of the movement. Fray Luis de Maluenda consequently lamented the day when "men with little learning took advantage of Scripture but poorly understood to defend their opinions and pass as if they were learned and wise" and when "poor little women" adandoned their distaffs and turned to the Epistles of St Paul.[33]

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[31] The idea that the investigation was interrupted because of the *comunero* revolt has been widely accepted. Nevertheless the Inquisition did continue its activities in Castille, and even in Guadalajara, in this period. See Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism*, pp. 53–55, 139; and Hamilton, "Merciful Inquisitors: Disagreements within the Holy Office about the Alumbrados of Toledo," in Michael Erbe et al., eds, *Querdenken: Dissens und Toleranz im Wandel der Geschichte (Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von Hans R.Guggisberg)* (Mannheim, 1996), pp. 123–33, especially pp. 125–26.

[32] Proceso de Alcaraz, fol. 359r.

[33] Fray Luis de Maluenda, *Tratado llamado excelencias de la fe*… (Burgos, 1537), sigs. L1r–v.

In the early 1520s the *dejados* were more and more vociferous in their disapproval of the mystical excesses of the *recogidos* in the Franciscan convents. It was as a result of Alcaraz's attempt to denounce what he described as the friars' "illusions" that he and Isabel de la Cruz again came to the attention of the Holy Office. The Franciscans had the support of their superiors, and the Franciscan provincial defrocked Isabel de la Cruz in the spring of 1524. She, Alcaraz, and another follower, the priest Gaspar de Bedoya, were arrested by the Inquisition shortly afterwards.

Other witnesses responded to the edicts of grace. Many of the early charges were confirmed, while further ones were added. But in fact hardly any of them altered the original doctrine the *dejados* were accused of teaching. By then, however, the Inquisitors were aware of a far more serious heresy: Lutheranism. Works by Luther had been smuggled into Spain in 1521, and on 21 March of that year the pope urged both the constable and the admiral of Castille to prevent their spread. Penalties were announced for anyone found in possession of Luther's writings, or who even dared to discuss his errors in public or in private. Luther, in the eyes of the Inquisition, came to be connected with the *conversos*, who were responsible for bringing his works into the country, and with the rebellious *comuneros*, whose demands had included the abolition of tithes and the suppression of the Holy Office. The arrival in Spain of Protestant works nevertheless continued, and in May 1523 the Inquisitors discovered a batch of Lutheran literature dispatched from the Low Countries to the Basque area, apparently intended for Valencia.[34]

How much Isabel de la Cruz and Alcaraz knew about Luther at the time of their arrest is unclear. Some information about the events in Germany had undoubtedly reached them, but Luther's first writings, available in Latin, would only have been accessible to the more learned figures on the fringes of the movement, such as Juan de Cazalla, scholars at Alcalá, and members of the imperial court. The Lutheran works in Castilian sent to Valencia would probably have passed through Guadalajara, but, hard though the Inquisitors tried to associate the first *dejados* they arrested with Lutheranism, they never managed to

[34] Augustin Redondo, "Luther et l'Espagne de 1520 à 1536," *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* 1 (1965): 109–65. See also John E. Longhurst, *Luther's Ghost in Spain (1517–1546)* (Lawrence, 1969).

do so convincingly.[35] By the time of María de Cazalla's arrest in 1532, on the other hand, matters had changed. She had frequented the circles of scholars such as Bernardino de Tovar and Juan del Castillo, with whom she had discussed Luther. She was consequently accused of admiring him and she admitted that she had heard him praised.[36]

The Inquisitors' reluctance to reveal too much about Luther's teaching meant that the campaign against Lutheranism had to be conducted with a certain discretion. This was also true of their attack on the readers of Desiderius Erasmus. Venerated by the emperor and his court, invited to Spain by Cardinal Cisneros, adulated at the university of Alcalá and by many princes of the Spanish church, Erasmus was read first in Latin and then, after 1526, in Castilian. Between 1527 and 1531 his works appeared both in Latin and in Spanish translation and the *Enchiridion* in particular met with remarkable success. But Erasmus had his enemies. Scholars such as Diego López de Zúñiga criticized his edition of the New Testament. And it was also López de Zúñiga who claimed in 1522 that Erasmus was "not only a Lutheran but the standard-bearer and prince of Lutherans."[37] He would be joined by the Franciscan Luis de Carvajal, who was horrified by Erasmus's attacks on scholasticism and monasticism.

Even if the Inquisitor General Alfonso Manrique was one of Erasmus's supporters, the world of offended friars and professional theologians who resented novelty was well represented in the Holy Office. The Inquisition started to lead the campaign against the humanist long before the official condemnation of many of his works in 1559. In this campaign the accusation of *alumbradismo* played an important part. Yet even here it was difficult to associate the first *dejados* to be arrested with Erasmianism. Alcaraz quoted the *Enchiridion* in his defense, but he did so in 1527. The Castilian version of the work had only appeared in 1526, when Alcaraz was in prison, and he would appear to have quoted it on the advice of his defense counsel, Fray Reginaldo de Esquina.[38] María de Cazalla, however, did indeed have time to read

[35] Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism*, pp. 71–75.

[36] Ortega Costa, ed., *Proceso…contra María de Cazalla*, pp. 82, 109, 117–19, 127–30.

[37] Marcel Bataillon, *Erasme et l'Espagne*, ed. Daniel Devoto & Charles Amiel, 3 vols (Geneva, 1991; reprint of the 1937 edition with corrections and supplements), 1:77–109, 134.

[38] Proceso de Alcaraz, fols 338r–v.

the *Enchiridion*, and said at her trial that she was particularly touched by the section on the "inner and outer man".[39]

The incarceration of the first three *dejados* would lead to a series of arrests which went on for almost 15 years. Isabel de la Cruz and her followers would soon be joined by other *beatas* and their devotees with whom they had been in touch—for example by Francisca Hernández and her admirers in the vicinity of Valladolid, as well as the "apostles" assembled on the estate of the marquess of Villena's brother-in-law and admiral of Castile, Don Fadrique Enríquez, in Medina de Río-seco—and by scholars at Alcalá who were close to María de Cazalla. María de Cazalla herself, who had responded to the edicts of grace, was not arrested until 1532. The last trial, in 1539, was that of Rodrigo de Bivar, the duke of Infantado's cantor. Together with the crippled weaver from Pastrana, Alonso López de la Palomera, he was one of very few Old Christians to be tried.[40]

By and large the sentences were relatively light. The heaviest were those passed on Alcaraz and Isabel de la Cruz. In 1529 Alcaraz was flogged, while Isabel de la Cruz was led through the streets of Toledo and the towns in which they had proselytized: Guadalajara, Escalona and Pastrana. Their property was confiscated and they were sentenced to perpetual confinement and the wearing of the penitential habit. By 1537, however, Alcaraz was again living with his wife and one of his daughters. Two years later he was allowed freedom of movement within the precincts of Toledo. He was given some light spiritual penances and was relieved of wearing his San Benito. Isabel de la Cruz was released from confinement in 1538, given spiritual penances, and obliged to remain within the precincts of Guadalajara. Gaspar de Bedoya, whose trial has been lost, was free by 1533. María de Cazalla was fined 100 ducats and had to abjure *de levi.* Rodrigo de Bivar (who was never actually imprisoned) was sentenced to abjure *de vehementi*, pay a fine of 200 ducats, and suffer confinement in a monastery but the last part of the sentence was commuted to an additional fine of 30 ducats.[41] So the Inquisitors never seem to have taken the heresy of the *dejados* very seriously. They were divided from the outset; and, even

[39] Ortega Costa, ed., *Proceso…contra María de Cazalla*, pp. 110, 217, 223.
[40] See Hamilton, ed., *Proceso de Rodrigo de Bivar*, pp. 7, 57, 91.
[41] Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism*, pp. 60–62.

if some of Alcaraz's judges were in favour of relaxation, a majority voted for mercy.[42]

Yet, clement though they might have been towards the *dejados*, the Inquisitors proved far more severe to some of the other defendants designated as *alumbrados*. As they spread their nets across Castille, the range of accusations increased and came to include Lutheranism. One of the greatest scholars in Spain, Juan de Vergara, who had been trained at the university of Alcalá and was closely connected to the imperial court, was imprisoned in June 1533. He was accused of insulting the Holy Office, and, like his half-brother Bernardino de Tovar, who had been incarcerated three years earlier, of Lutheranism, and of "knowing, teaching and believing the errors of those called *alumbrados* which almost coincide with the said Lutheran errors."[43] Two of María de Cazalla's acquaintances, Juan del Castillo[44] and Juan López de Celain,[45] were sent to the stake as Lutherans. Any clarity which might first have been perceptible in the definition of the *alumbrados* was beclouded by accusations of Protestantism as the campaign extended into a general attack on the humanism which had been defended by Cardinal Cisneros and which was practised at the university of Alcalá and by members of the imperial court.

Used as a term of abuse from the outset, the word *alumbrado*, in contrast to *dejado*, quickly took its part in the traditional catalogues of heresies. It was used against Ignatius Loyola and the nascent Society of Jesus.[46] It was advanced against the saintly John of Ávila and his followers in Andalusia, and against Teresa of Ávila in the 1580s.[47] It was marshalled by the Dominican scholar Melchor Cano to criticize the *Comentarios sobre el catechismo christiano* by his fellow Dominican Bartolomé de Carranza, Archbishop of Toledo.[48] It was employed

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[42] Hamilton, "Merciful Inquisitors," pp. 126–33.

[43] John E. Longhurst, "Alumbrados, erasmistas y luteranos en el proceso de Juan de Vergara," *Cuadernos de historia de España* 28 (1958): 102–65, at p. 152.

[44] John E. Longhurst, "The Alumbrados of Toledo: Juan del Castillo and the Lucenas," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 45 (1954): 233–53.

[45] Angela Selke de Sánchez, "Vida y muerte de Juan López de Celain, alumbrado vizcaíno," *Bulletin hispanique* 62 (1960): 136–62.

[46] John E. Longhurst, "Saint Ignatius at Alcalá," *Archivum historicum Societatis Jesu* 26 (1957): 252–56.

[47] Álvaro Huerga, *Historia de los alumbrados*, 4 vols (Madrid, 1978–88), vol. 2: *Los alumbrados de la alta Andalucía*.

[48] Fermín Caballero, *Vida de Melchor Cano* (Madrid, 1871), pp. 536–615.

against a group of mystics in Llerena in Estremadura in the 1570s,[49] and against another group of mystics in Seville in the 1620s.[50] The word consequently accumulated innumerable associations, and from these historiography has suffered.

The elasticity of the term *alumbrado* meant that the *dejados*, too, were presented in various different connections. Scholars have long been arguing about how their teaching should be interpreted. Was it a form of mysticism? Was it affected by Protestantism or Erasmianism? Did it owe a debt to an essentially *converso* tradition? In examining answers to these questions, one point should always be kept in mind: we are exceptionally well informed about the trials of some of the *dejados*, but we have no spontaneous statements of their beliefs. Their only writings to have survived are letters to the Inquisitors. The charges, repeated over the years by different witnesses, undoubtedly give an idea of what they believed. A substantial number of them, moreover, were accepted by the accused, even if they denied that they were heretical. Yet trials are trials and the answers to questions put by the Inquisitors to defendants eager to prove their orthodoxy cannot always be regarded as totally reliable indications of what they really thought.

Interpretations

Although a few attempts were made to study the *alumbrados* and to publish parts of their trials in the late 19th and early 20th centuries,[51]

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[49] Huerga, *Historia*, vol. 1: *Los alumbrados de Extremadura (1570–1582)*.

[50] Huerga, *Historia*, vol. 4: *Los alumbrados de Sevilla (1605–1630)*.

[51] A distinction between *recogidos* and *dejados* was clearly made in Eduard Boehmer, *Franzisca Hernandez und Frai Franzisco Ortiz: Anfänge reformatorischen Bewegungen in Spanien unter Kaiser Karl V aus Originalacten des Inquisitionstribunals zu Toledo* (Leipzig, 1865), pp. 20–23. Parts of the trial of María de Cazalla were published by Julio Melgares Marín, *Procedimientos de la Inquisición*, 2 vols (Madrid, 1886), 2: 5–159. In 1903 Manuel Serrano y Sanz published "Pedro Ruiz de Alcaraz, iluminado alcarreño del siglo XVI," *Revista de archivos, bibliotecas y museos* 8 (1903), 1–16, 126–39. Over 30 years later the *dejados* were discussed by Bernardino Llorca in *Die spanische Inquisition und die 'Alumbrados' (1509–1667) nach der Originalakten in Madrid und in anderen Archiven* (Berlin, 1934), pp. 16–40. See A. Gordon Kinder's survey in his bibliography, "Alumbrados of the Kingdom of Toledo," *Bibliotheca dissidentium: répertoire des non-conformistes religieux des seizième et dix-septième siècles*, ed. André Séguenny, vol. 16 (Bibliotheca Bibliographica Aureliana) 144 (Baden-Baden and Bouxwiller, 1994), pp. 30–37.

the present approach to the phenomenon starts with the great dissertation of Marcel Bataillon, *Erasme et l'Espagne*, which appeared in 1937. Bataillon believed that *dejamiento* should be seen as one of the elements which made Spain so receptive to the works of Erasmus.[52]

From the 1950s on a series of important documents were published—the edict of faith of 1525 condemning the *alumbrados* (which had in fact been discovered by Bataillon),[53] a couple of the surviving trials of the *dejados*,[54] and a great deal of subsidiary material relating to the *alumbrados* in a more general sense and which helped to place the movement in a broader context.[55] This meant that many of the facts about the *dejados* and their trials could be established once and for all.

The lack of writings by the *dejados* themselves, however, has induced scholars to seize upon works produced by writers who were once close to them, and to take these works as keys to their beliefs. This is best exemplified by the treatment accorded to Juan de Valdés and his first

[52] "Pour comprendre le caractère de l'érasmisme espagnol et pour s'expliquer son brusque essor, il est indispensable de le replonger au sein d'un mouvement spirituel plus vaste que l'Inquisition essaye alors d'endiguer: celui des *illuminés*, *abandonnés* ou *parfaits*. Pareille méthode peut sembler dangereuse, et elle l'est en effet, puisque ce mouvement ne nous est connu que de façon fragmentaire. Pourtant, quand on l'étudie aux sources, c'est-à-dire dans les documents d'Inquisition, on voit l'érasmisme mêlé à l'illuminisme de façon si inextricable que l'on comprend la nécessité de ce détour par des régions mal explorées. Le risque est d'ailleurs moins grand qu'il ne semble, car l'*illuminisme* devient lui-même bien plus compréhensible quand on y rattache le mouvement érasmien. Les tendances des *alumbrados* offrent des analogies évidentes avec celles de la grande révolution religieuse qui remue alors l'Europe, et que des mots comme *protestantisme* ou *réforme* résument de façon si trompeuse. On ne se débarasse pas du problème en constatant que les affirmations des *illuminés* coincident sur certains points avec celles des protestants, en montrant que 'l'illuminisme espagnol', né avant que Luther n'affichât ses 95 thèses, est une doctrine distincte et indépendante du 'protestantisme'. Le 'protestantisme' aussi a des origines antérieures au 31 octobre 1517" (Bataillon, *Erasme et l'Espagne*, 1: 179–80).

[53] See footnote 1.

[54] The complete trials of the *dejados* that have appeared so far are: Ortega Costa, ed., *Proceso… contra María de Cazalla* and Hamilton, ed., *Proceso de Rodrigo de Bivar (1539)*. See also Longhurst, "La beata Isabel de la Cruz ante la Inquisición."

[55] It is in this category that we must place John E. Longhurst's edition of excerpts from the trial of Juan de Vergara. See John E. Longhurst, "Alumbrados, erasmistas y luteranos en el proceso de Juan de Vergara," *Cuadernos de historia de España* 27 (1958): 99–163; 28 (1958): 102–65; 29–30 (1959): 266–92; 31–2 (1960): 322–56; 35–6 (1962): 337–53; 37–8 (1963): 356–71; excerpts from the trial of Francisco Ortiz in Selke de Sánchez, *El Santo Oficio de la Inquisición: proceso de Fr. Francisco Ortiz (1529–1532)*; and José Manuel Carrete Parrondo, *Movimiento alumbrado y Renacimiento español—proceso inquisitorial contra Luis de Beteta* (Madrid, 1980), the trial of a man on the fringes of the movement.

publication, the *Diálogo de doctrina christiana*. In the early 1520s Valdés, who had probably arrived at the castle of Escalona when he was about 15, was employed as a page by the marquess of Villena. He was one of the members of the marquess's household who would sit at the feet of Alcaraz and listen, with admiration, to his discussions about religion. Soon after Alcaraz's arrest in 1524, Valdés left Escalona. By 1526, he had settled in Alcalá, where he attended the university until 1531. The *Diálogo* was printed in Alcalá in 1529 by Miguel de Eguía, who had also published works by Erasmus and was close to Rodrigo de Bivar and other *dejados*. It was dedicated to the marquess of Villena, and it would subsequently be read with enthusiasm by María de Cazalla.[56]

On the face of it, therefore, the *Diálogo* could have contained some of the ideas which Valdés had picked up from Alcaraz at Escalona. Yet Valdés, coming from a powerful *converso* family in Cuenca,[57] had also been exposed to other influences. One of his elder brothers, Alfonso de Valdés, attached to the court as imperial secretary, was a close friend of Erasmus and Juan de Valdés himself also corresponded with the Dutch humanist. Travelling in the train of Charles V, Alfonso had attended the Diet of Worms in 1521 and had had access to the writings of Protestant reformers from the outset. Alcalá, moreover, was a bastion of humanism, where evangelism was cultivated and the reformers' works were in circulation. While Marcel Bataillon brought out the influence on Valdés of Erasmus in his edition of the *Diálogo de doctrina christiana* of 1925,[58] we now know, thanks to the research of Carlos Gilly,[59] that the book contains substantial excerpts from the writings of Luther (the *Decem praecepta Wittenbergensi praedicata populo* of 1518 and the *Explanatio dominicae orationis pro simplicioribus laicis* of 1520), Oecolampadius (*In Iesaiam prophetam hypomnemata* of 1525), and possibly Melanchthon (*Enchiridion elementorum puerilium* of 1524).

That the *dejados* might have taken some of their ideas from Luther had been suggested by Angela Selke de Sánchez in 1952. The Inquisi-

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[56] Ortega Costa, ed., *Proceso… contra María de Cazalla*, p. 118.

[57] See Stefania Pastore, *Un'eresia spagnola: spiritualità conversa, alumbradismo e inquisizione (1449–1559)* (Florence, 2004), pp. 167–74, for new material concerning his background.

[58] Juan de Valdés, *Diálogo de doctrina christiana* (Alcalá de Henares, 1529), facsimile reproduction, ed. Marcel Bataillon (Coimbra, 1925).

[59] Gilly, "Juan de Valdés," pp. 257–305.

tors, she said, were aware of the danger of the new Lutheran teaching and, in the edict condemning the *alumbrados*, had tried to "dissolve" it by "splitting it into a series of small heresies which were less terrifying."[60] This, of course, remains conjecture. But Selke goes further still, equating *dejamiento* or abandonment "to the love of God" with abandonment to faith, and consequently with a form of justification by faith.[61] This conclusion was taken over by José Nieto in his *Juan de Valdés and the Origins of the Spanish and Italian Reformation* of 1970.

Resting largely on letters written to the Inquisitors by Alcaraz when he was in prison—which he regarded as sincere statements of what he believed—Nieto emphasized the accountant's reliance on the New Testament. But he also elaborated a doctrine of far greater complexity than the evidence warrants. He projected the original propagation of Alcaraz's message back to 1511 at the latest, and that of Isabel de la Cruz to 1509 or 1510, and denied any influence of Luther. He argued that the accountant should, rather, be seen as a precursor of Luther and acknowledged as a thinker of exceptional originality. "Alcaraz's radical interpretation of divine love," he concluded, "destroys all the medieval and mystical conceptions of love and its mystical ladder, and leaves man alone in his sin and misery at the mercy of and in the love of God. Alcaraz, thus, anticipates Luther's 'copernican revolution' and reverses the medieval theological process from an anthropocentric to a theocentric one."[62] To this interpretation Nieto, oblivious to any conflicting evidence, has stuck doggedly ever since.[63]

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[60] Angela Selke de Sánchez, "Algunos datos nuevos sobre los primeros alumbrados: el edicto de 1515 y su relación con el proceso de Alcaraz," *Bulletin hispanique* 54 (1952): 125–52. She notes, "Los inquisidores trataban, al parecer, de disolver la gran herejía luterana fraccionándola en una serie de herejías pequeñas, menos terríficas… Según se desprende de dichas proposiciones, no se trata sólo de luteranismo en un sentido lato, no sólo de esa tendencia hacia un cristianismo interior, de la que participaban, en último término, todas las corrientes de renovación religiosa de la época, sino de un pensamiento y un sentir religiosos que, aunque tengan antecedentes en los orígenes de la Reforma, parecen tener relación directa con las doctrinas principales de Lutero y quizás podrían ser explicados a través de éstas" (pp. 127, 129).

[61] "El *dejamiento* de Alcaraz y de los *alumbrados* es, pues, reducido a su fórmula más simple, un abandonarse al amor de Dios, es decir, a la fe…" (Selke de Sánchez, "Algunos datos nuevos," p. 147). See the criticism by Antonio Márquez, "Orígen y naturaleza del iluminismo en Castilla (1525–1529)," *Salmanticensis* 17 (1970): 339–62, especially 343–44.

[62] José C. Nieto, *Juan de Valdés and the Origins of the Spanish and Italian Reformation* (Geneva, 1970), p. 75.

[63] For a more recent statement of it see José C. Nieto, *El Renacimiento y la otra España: visión cultural socioespiritual* (Geneva, 1997), pp. 103–04.

Quite apart from the questionable chronology which Nieto adopts, his interpretation gives rise to some serious objections. Not only does he follow Selke in seeing Alcaraz's teaching as a form of justification by faith, but he concludes that Alcaraz cannot, consequently, be regarded as a mystic. This is in defiance of all we know about the early Reformation. Justification by faith, in one form or another, could indeed be reconciled with mysticism. The concept of *Gelassenheit* (or "abandonment"), which we find among the mystics of the Rhineland in the Middle Ages, was also central to the late medieval tract known as the *Theologia germanica* which Luther edited and which was immensely popular in many circles at the time of the Reformation.[64]

Nieto's book on Valdés met with severe criticism. One of its harshest critics was Antonio Márquez, who pointed out factual errors and distortions of the text of Alcaraz's trial.[65] And in 1972 Márquez published his own book, *Los alumbrados, orígenes y filosofía 1525–1559*, which was the result of a far closer and more reliable reading of the sources. Márquez saw the *dejados* as mystics in the tradition of the Pseudo-Dionysius. But while I agree that the *dejados* were mystics, we should be cautious in attributing their mysticism to any one particular source.

Márquez's argument is based primarily on Alcaraz's quotation, in his defense, of the *Sol de contemplativos* by Hugh of Balma, a popular version of the Pseudo-Dionysian *Mystical Theology*. Alcaraz, however, seems to have had a sizeable library, and to have owned nearly all the devotional and mystical works available in Castilian, published under the patronage of Cardinal Cisneros and with the full approval of the authorities. The *Sol de contemplativos* is indeed one of them, but there are also the *Imitation of Christ*, the *Spiritual Ladder* of John Clima-

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[64] For a broader discussion see Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, pp. 73–85; and Steven E. Ozment, *Mysticism and Dissent: Religious Ideology and Social Protest in the Sixteenth Century* (New Haven, 1973), pp. 17–25.

[65] Antonio Márquez, "Juan de Valdés, teólogo de los alumbrados," *La Ciudad de Dios* 184 (1971): 214–28. Cf. the courteous, but somewhat sceptical, review by Marcel Bataillon, *Bibliothèque d'humanisme et Renaissance* 35 (1973): 374–81. Nieto certainly seems to have had some difficulty in reading that part of the trial of Alcaraz which he actually consulted. This has led to serious errors. He reads, for example, the reference to 1 Thess. 5:19 in the original trial (Proceso de Alcaraz, fol. 7r) as James 1:16 (Nieto, *Juan de Valdés*, p. 74), and interprets Alcaraz's statement accordingly. For a rehabilitation of Nieto, however, see Massimo Firpo, *Tra alumbrados e "spirituali": studi su Juan de Valdés e il valdesianesimo nella crisi religiosa del '500 italiano* (Florence, 1990), pp. 49–50.

cus, the *Directorio* of Herp, the book of Angela of Foligno, the letters and prayers of Catherine of Siena, the *Estímulo de amor* attributed to Bonaventure, the sermons of Saint Bernard, and probably the *Ejercitatorio de la vida espiritual* by García de Cisneros.[66] When writing letters in his own defense from his prison cell, Alcaraz appears to have had some of these books at his disposal. His quotations, particularly of John Climacus, Angela of Foligno, and the *Imitation of Christ*, are so accurate that they can hardly be attributed to his memory alone. But should they be taken as a reliable indication of the sources of his beliefs—and in that case the frequency of references to the *Imitation of Christ* could suggest the influence of the *devotio moderna*—or was he simply trying to defend his orthodoxy with the best available means and possibly on the advice of his counsel Fray Reginaldo de Esquina?

The arguments of Antonio Márquez are far more persuasive than those of Nieto, but other answers to the problem of the origins of the *dejados*' beliefs have also been advanced. In the 1940s the greatest Spanish Arabist of his day, Miguel Asín Palacios, suggested an Islamic influence on the mysticism of the *alumbrados*, but this theory found little support.[67] While other authors followed the qualifications of the Inquisitors in seeking medieval sources, such as the Beghards, or indeed in seeing the new heresy as an offshoot of Protestantism, a number of scholars have drawn attention to the *converso* descent of the leading *dejados*, and have searched for Jewish precedents. This idea received a somewhat conservative expression in a lecture delivered by Melquíades Andrés Martín in 1973. Andrés believed *dejamiento* to be an essentially recent invention by *conversos* who had simply misunderstood the orthodox system of *recogimiento*.[68]

The *converso* trail is, in some respects, the most obvious. There is no doubt that the *dejados* were quite innocent of judaizing. The Inquisitors were trained to spot judaizers and rehearsed their technique at an early stage in the *dejado* trials, but they soon gave up.[69] Yet the idea

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[66] Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism*, pp. 26, 136.

[67] Miguel Asín Palacios, "Shadilíes y alumbrados", *Al-Andalus* 9 (1944): 321–45; 10 (1945): 1–52, 255–84; 11 (1946): 1–67.

[68] "Los alumbrados de Toledo de 1525 constituyen una mala inteligencia de la vía del recogimiento y amor puro, desarrollada en un medio de judeoconversos, en el ambiente español de la época, caracterizado por un subido amor a la interioridad y a la experiencia personal" (Melquíades Andrés Martín, *Nueva visión de los "alumbrados" de 1525* [Madrid, 1973], p. 14). Cf. Martín, *Los recogidos*, p. 170.

[69] Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism*, pp. 65–71.

of a *converso* tradition, in itself profoundly Christian, which lived on in the world of the *dejados*, must be taken seriously. It is discussed in the most recent study of the subject, Stefania Pastore's magnificently documented *Un'eresia spagnola: spiritualità conversa, alumbradismo e Inquisizione (1449–1559)* of 2004.

Pastore seeks the roots of the "Spanish heresy" in the debates among *conversos* in the 15th century. Certain *converso* churchmen, such as Alonso de Cartagena, the bishop of Burgos, strongly emphasized the new Christianity which they believed to be dawning. In this new era, no distinction would be made between those of Jewish and those of Christian descent but they would all participate in the true inner light emanating from Christ as the perfect members of a perfect Church. This idea was adopted by various members of the Hieronymite order, to which *conversos* were particularly attracted. It appears in the works of the Hieronymite Alonso de Oropesa, who also stressed the importance of the Scriptures (above all, of the Pauline Epistles), and by Hernando de Talavera, another Hieronymite *converso* who became the first archbishop of Granada.

A clear majority of the *dejados* (and of the *alumbrados* in a more general sense) were of *converso* descent. Stefania Pastore shows how important the figure of Talavera would always be for them. They all encouraged the reading of the Bible. Many cherished a belief—propounded by *converso* theologians of the previous century—in a Church whose members would attain perfection. Pastore detects traces of this same belief, the so-called *eresia spagnola*, from Alonso de Cartagena to Juan de Valdés, from the Sevillian circle of Ponce de La Fuente and the Hieronymites suspected of Lutheranism to Juan de Ávila, Arias Montano and even Servetus.

Conclusion

Where should research on the *dejados* now lead? Some new light, I believe, could be shed on the phenomenon by examining the future of those involved in the trials. Loyola, we saw, was accused of *alumbradismo*. He had little difficulty in confuting the charge. But various men implicated in the trials of the 1530s, acquainted with members of the circle of Isabel de la Cruz and María de Cazalla—Diego de Eguía, Manuel de Miona and Miguel de Torres—joined the Society

of Jesus.[70] Pedro de Marquina, who had been a committed *dejado* and had shared the devotion of his fellow page Juan de Valdés for Alcaraz at Escalona, was also attracted by the Jesuits. As a canon of Cuenca, he assisted in the foundation of the first Jesuit college in the diocese and was buried in the college chapel.[71] He had initially abandoned his plan to join a religious order on the advice of Alcaraz, but the Jesuits clearly satisfied the taste for evangelical piety which had once drawn him to the followers of Isabel de la Cruz.[72] The evolution of Juan de Valdés himself, as well as his later influence, is another example. After he left Spain for Italy, he tended ever more towards a spiritualism of his own, but his influence was great among Italian evangelicals. Some, such as Reginald Pole, remained in the Catholic Church, while others, like Pietro Carnesecchi, drifted ever closer to Protestantism.[73] Then there are the various members of the Cazalla family. María's cousin Pedro, the royal accountant, had been denounced for Lutheran sympathies. A number of his children, who included the imperial chaplain Agustín de Cazalla, would be deeply implicated in the Protestant movement in Valladolid in the 1550s.[74] Agustín de Cazalla was burned at the stake as a Lutheran. Further research might well reveal other examples, and it would be facilitated by the publication of the longest and most important of the *dejado* trials, that of Alcaraz.

If *dejamiento* could lead in such different directions, this was largely because of its hybrid nature and the different ingredients of which the movement was composed. On the one hand it was essentially mystical, with roots in the methods followed by Franciscans yearning for an *atajo* or shorcut to God which could be achieved both in the convent and in the world. The abandonment to the love of God preached by Alcaraz, on the other hand, was also reminiscent of the *Gelassenheit* of the Rhineland mystics and, however different in itself, it was ultimately compatible with the form of abandonment implicit in the later

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[70] Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism*, pp. 93–97.

[71] Sara T. Nalle, *God in La Mancha: Religious Reform and the People of Cuenca, 1500–1650* (Baltimore, 1992), pp. 77–78.

[72] Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism*, pp. 36–37.

[73] Firpo, *Tra alumbrados e "spirituali"*, pp. 127–53.

[74] For the complex question of the relationship between the various Cazallas, see Ortega Costa, ed., *Proceso… contra María de Cazalla*, p. 92.

teaching of justification by faith.[75] Then there was the criticism of many traditions of the Catholic church, the intensive reading of the New Testament, and the emphasis on the sinfulness of the individual all so typical of the evangelical movement of the time. To this was added the idea of perfectionism which may, as Stefania Pastore suggests, have been derived from a *converso* tradition but which might also have its origins in earlier heresies which affected the Franciscan Order.

The first decades of the 16th century were decades of spiritual restlessness, in Spain as well as in other parts of Europe. Movements came into existence in which disparate elements were combined. *Dejamiento* was one of them and, like most of the others, it was unable to survive the dogmatic definitions imposed by the Reformation and the Council of Trent.

[75] Pastore (*Un'eresia spagnola*, p. 185) refers to its adaptation by those *alumbrados* who were regarded as Lutherans, Juan del Castillo and Juan López de Celain.

PART TWO

SPECIFIC FIGURES

MOTHER JUANA DE LA CRUZ: MARIAN VISIONS AND FEMALE PREACHING*

Jessica A. Boon

The turn of the 16th century was a time of great turmoil in religious life on the Iberian Peninsula. The last decades of the 15th century not only included such well-known events as the origins of the Inquisition, the end of the Reconquest, and the expulsion of the Jews, but also the equally influential Cisnerian reform of the religious orders and the clergy. In addition to formalizing theological instruction at the University of Alcalá and introducing humanistic methods of biblical exegesis, Archbishop Cisneros's promotion of visionary activity and vernacular mysticism led to a half-century of extraordinary openness throughout the peninsula to a variety of forms of spirituality.[1] This openness, although terminated abruptly by the publication of the Index of Prohibited Books in 1559, paved the way for the later well-known flowering of Spanish mysticism in the Discalced Carmelite and Jesuit Orders.

One direct beneficiary of Cisneros's respect for local mystics was a regular Franciscan tertiary by the name of Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534), a nun and abbess of the convent of Santa María de Cubas in Castille. While rapt in contemplation, Juana experienced numerous visions of *figuras*, or allegorical pageants which transpired in heaven. The festivals and various biblical scenes were narrated to her (and through her, to the world) by the Holy Spirit, speaking in the first person as Jesus Christ.[2] Her visions were in fact public experiences,

* The kernel of this essay was presented under the title "Conventionalized Innovation: Juana de la Cruz's Manipulation of the Passion in Support of Female Preaching" at the 38th International Medieval Congress (Kalamazoo, Mich., 2–5 May 2002). Research for this project was funded in part by a grant from the University Research Council of Southern Methodist University. I wish to acknowledge Ronald E. Surtz for his collaboration on this essay, Catherine Adamson for her insightful reading of a draft, and Jarrod Neal for his editing assistance. All translations are mine.

[1] José García Oro, *El Cardenal Cisneros: vida y empresas*, 2 vols (Madrid, 1992).

[2] "Comienza el libro que es llamado Conhorte, el cual es hecho por boca del Espíritu Santo que hablaba en una religiosa elevada en contemplación, la cual habla se hacía en persona de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo, el cual es el que alumbra los corazones y

her raptures taking place as five- or six-hour sermons in her convent chapel every Sunday over 13 years, with the voice of Christ audible to the congregation by means of Juana's vocal cords. Cisneros provided Juana support both to preach and to choose the chaplain of her convent,[3] giving her a level of authority over her own religious life and that of others which had few precedents in the Catholic Church.

In addition to her undoubted impact on religious life in Castille-Leon during her lifetime,[4] Juana's influence continued after her death, due to the existence of a manuscript called *El Conhorte*, containing a year's worth of her sermons. The sermon manuscript was annotated in the margins often enough to indicate several generations of readers, yet was not published in print until 1999.[5] There are two other texts ascribed at least in part to Juana as author, works which she dictated to her amanuensis, María Evangelista. One is a semi-autobiography, the *Vida y fin de la bienabenturada virgen sancta Juana de la Cruz*,[6] which switches between first person (Juana's voice) and third person (María's voice) and ends with an account of Juana's funeral and accompanying miracles.[7] The other is the *Libro de la casa y monasterio*

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acostumbra a hablar en figuras" (Juana de la Cruz, *El Conhorte: sermones de una mujer. La Santa Juana [1481–1534]*, ed. Inocente García Andrés, 2 vols [Madrid, 1999], preface, 1: 227). The original ms. is *El libro del conorte*, Escorial J–II–18.

[3] Cisneros occasionally attended her sermons, thus implicitly approving of them. He also explicitly extended her extraordinary authority by writing two letters mandating that she be allowed to appoint the chaplain, a decision confirmed by the pope. See Ronald E. Surtz, *The Guitar of God: Gender, Power, and Authority in the Visionary World of Mother Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)* (Philadelphia, 1990), pp. 4–5; María del Mar Graña Cid, "Terciarias franciscanas, apostolado y ministerios: Juana de la Cruz y el sacerdocio femenino," in *El franciscanismo en la Península Ibérica: balance y perspectivas (I Congreso Internacional, Madrid, 22–27 septiembre 2003)*, ed. María del Mar Graña Cid (Barcelona, 2005), p. 609.

[4] Although there is no evidence that she directly affected daily religious life outside her convent (in which she set up numerous novel forms of devotion), her sermons were well attended by clergy, including bishops. Thus, although we cannot trace her impact, we know she had an extensive audience.

[5] The manuscript has numerous annotations from a century of readers, while her life and visions were the subject of a trilogy of plays, titled *La Santa Juana*, by Tirso de Molina in the 17th century.

[6] *Vida y fin de la bienabenturada virgen sancta Juana de la Cruz*, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio, El Escorial, K-III-13. Hereafter cited as *Vida y fin*, with chapter numbers.

[7] Several scholars treat the *Vida y fin* as the first biography of Juana. In the introduction to the first printed edition, however, García Andrés cites documents from the canonization process which indicate that the nuns ascribed authorship to Juana. He makes the distinction between what Evangelista wrote "al dictado" under Juana's direction, and what she wrote as a witness, or "testiga de vista" (Inocente García Andrés, "Introduction" to his edition of *El Conhorte*, pp. 24–25). See also Daniel de

de Nuestra Señora de la Cruz,[8] a history of convent life at Santa María de Cubas that includes several visions also found in the *Vida y fin*, additional previously undocumented visions, and an extensive record of the convent's devotional practices initiated by Juana (such as rituals around Marian images, a conventual confraternity, religious plays, and songs).

These three texts, none exactly written down by the hand and quill of Juana—but all ascribed to her body as the receptacle for Christ's actions in the world—provoke a wide range of questions about mystical experience, audience reception, genres of spiritual literature, and authorial intent. In the public sermons collected in *El Conhorte*, Juana proclaims herself as much of a prophet as a visionary.[9] She argues that the scribes of the Old Testament and the Gospels had not had time to present the whole story, and indeed had not needed to in order to accomplish their mission, which was to found the church. Juana, however, had now been chosen as the appropriate instrument through which God could transmit a more complete version of the biblical narrative concerning the creation, Jesus's Passion, etc.—information which in turn affects the formulation of doctrine.[10] Claiming that God (as Christ, as Holy Spirit, or by the medium of Juana's guardian angel, Laruel) was speaking verbatim to the audience through her, Juana addressed such diverse subjects as the Trinity, angelology, and the Immaculate Conception, without ever incurring permanent censure by contemporary authorities for her apparent trespass upon the male domains of theology and preaching. This technique for alleging divine authority without infringing on human (male) prerogatives—that is, Juana's assertion in her sermons that she was merely the instrument through which God chose to speak—has been studied extensively by both Ronald Surtz and Ángela Muñoz Fernández.[11]

Pablo Maroto, "La 'Santa Juana,' mística franciscana del siglo XVI español: significación histórica," *Revista de espiritualidad* 60 (2001): 577–601, at p. 587.

[8] Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, Ms. 9661. Hereafter cited as *Libro de la casa.* The convent, also known as María de la Cruz, or Cubas (for its location), was originally a *beaterio* but was joined to the Third Regular Order of Franciscans by the time Juana was abbess.

[9] For discussion of the various literary genres in which the sermons fit, see García Andrés, "Introduction," pp. 131–70.

[10] See Ronald E. Surtz, "La Madre Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534) y la cuestión de la autoridad religiosa femenina," *Nueva revista de filología hispánica* 33 (1984): 489–91.

[11] See Surtz, *Guitar of God*, and Ángela Muñoz Fernández, *Acciones e intenciones de mujeres en la vida religiosa de los siglos XV y XVI* (Madrid, 1995), pp. 184–88.

In addition to her manipulation of the traditional trope of claiming divine intervention for female authority, I suggest that Juana adduces authority for her role as preacher based on the role the Virgin Mary played in Juana's vocation, her convent, and popular devotion of the era. Whereas Surtz, Graña Cid, and Cortés Timoner understand Juana as primarily Christomimetic,[12] her Christocentrism cannot be understood as independent from her strong identification with—and devotion to—the Virgin. Although many scholars have highlighted the essential role played by the Virgin Mary in Juana's vocation,[13] they rely on her sermon about the Immaculate Conception for their primary proof. Yet it is only one sermon among 72, and thus too limited a basis from which to extrapolate an authorizing technique. In this essay, attention to the interplay between Jesus and Mary in Juana's private experiences as narrated in *Vida y fin* and *Libro de la casa* provides a lens with which to analyse the authority that the figures of Christ and the Virgin lend to Juana in the sermons, which were in fact public visionary presentations. In order to assess the Mariological authority upon which Juana relies, it is necessary to consider first the problems and possibilities around visionary claims in the Spanish church at the turn of the 16th century.

The openness of Spanish authorities to visionary experience on the one hand, when combined with the intensity of Marian devotion common in late medieval Iberia on the other, allowed Juana to live a vocation filled with extraordinary experiences in relation to Marian icons and visions without seeming entirely unorthodox. These two strands are essential context to the authoritative interpretative claims Juana makes in relation to both Mariology and Christology during the Holy Week sermons. The manner in which Christ and Mary are inseparable in Juana's authorizing strategy is revealed by a close study of Juana's

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[12] This argument rests in part on her temporary reception of the stigmata. See Surtz, *Guitar of God*, pp. 68–69; Graña Cid, "Terciarias franciscanas," pp. 613–14; and María del Mar Cortés Timoner, *Sor Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)* (Madrid, 2004), p. 35.

[13] Ronald E. Surtz, *Writing Women in Late Medieval and Early Modern Spain: The Mothers of Saint Teresa of Avila* (Philadelphia, 1995), pp. 104–26; Ángela Muñoz Fernández, "El monocato como espacio de cultura femenina: a propósito de la Inmaculada Concepción de María y la representación de la sexuación femenina," in *Pautas históricas de sociabilidad femenina: rituales y modelos de representación*, ed. Mary Nash, María José de la Pascua, and Gloria Espigado Tocino (Cádiz, 1999), pp. 83–86; Graña Cid, "Terciarias franciscanas," p. 620; and J. Gómez López, "El *Conhorte* de Sor Juana de la Cruz y su sermón sobre la Inmaculada Concepción de María," *Hispania sacra* 36 (1984): 601–27.

Holy Week sermons from Palm Sunday through Good Friday, as it is during these visions when Juana can draw on the contemporary Iberian tradition of the twin Passions of the Mother and the Son in order to make her case forcefully for her own right to preach.

Visionaries in Early Modern Spain

Catholic theologians have long been suspicious of visionary experience as a method for God to communicate with human beings. Visionary experiences are recorded in the Bible; yet ever since the age of Augustine, sensory experience of a God beyond sensory description has been deemed potentially misleading. Augustine based his influential hierarchy of the forms for experiencing God—corporeal, spiritual, and intellectual—in part on the possibility that the devil could manipulate the senses sufficiently to give the devotee a false experience.[14] Thus the very event which most influences a visionary's understanding of God might well be erroneous, leading him or her to damnation rather than salvation. In general, the church only accepted the validity of visions confirming the orthodox theology already articulated by theologians separate from visionary experience.[15] Although numerous men and women recorded visions throughout the Middle Ages, just as many (and usually more influential) priests and theologians warned against seeking rapture, "spiritual sweetness", or ecstasy. In the century previous to Juana's era, for example, both Jean Gerson and Vincent Ferrer published severe warnings against relying on any understanding of God received in the form of a vision.[16] In essence, the disagreement lay in the claim of the visionaries on the one hand that Christ's choice to take on human form initiated the possibility of sensory experience of the divine, versus the claim of the visionaries' opponents on the other hand that divinity is too abstract to be fully received in visual or oral form.

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[14] *De genesi ad litteram*, 12.12.25; Augustine, *Literal Meaning of Genesis*, trans. John Hammond Taylor (New York, 1982), pp. 193–94.

[15] Bernard McGinn, "Visions and Critiques of Visions in Thirteenth-Century Mysticism," in *Rending the Veil: Concealment and Secrecy in the History of Religions*, ed. Elliot R. Wolfson (New York, 1999), pp. 87–93.

[16] Jean Gerson, "On Distinguishing True From False Revelations," in *Early Works*, ed. Brian Patrick McGuire (New York, 1998), pp. 334–64. Vincent Ferrer's book was translated in the early 16th century as *Tratado de la vida espiritual* (Alcalá, 1510).

In contradistinction to the official suspicion of visionary experience, however, not only were Juana's visionary sermons valued within her convent during her time as abbess and for the next century of readers,[17] but her preaching was supported by some of the most powerful people in the hierarchy of the Spanish church.[18] It is significant that one of Archbishop Cisneros's many interventions in the renovation of Christian spirituality post-1500 was the establishment of a university press, with subventions for the translations of numerous medieval spiritual treatises by both male and female authors. Among them was Vincent Ferrer's well-known handbook on spirituality, yet the authorized Cisnerian translation edited out precisely one chapter, the one in which Ferrer warned against visions.[19] Juana's form of ministry thus fit into, and in turn influenced, a heyday of spiritual diversity on the peninsula. Yet given the critiques directed against Juana over certain of her managerial decisions,[20] the question of her authority was clearly a critical one. Both she and her fellow nuns defended her divine connection (and therefore her divine mandate to preach) in the manuscript works presented by her followers first as supporting evidence for her sanctity as a preacher, and later as evidence in her canonization process.[21]

Although her works remained unpublished due to the Index of Prohibited Books' ban on the dispersal of manuscript sermons,[22] it does not appear that either Juana or her sermons were ever formally sanctioned by the Holy Office.[23] Given the medieval standard that visions could not contradict collectively sanctioned orthodox dogma—and the Inquisition's growing interest from the 1520s in controlling home-

[17] The manuscript of the *Conhorte* is covered with glosses and expurgations from Francisco Ortiz, an Inquisitorial censor, and Francisco de Torres, all dating from the 1530s–60s. In the 17th century, the (failed) canonization process led to many more readers of her text. See García Andrés, "Introduction," pp. 17–49, 86–109.

[18] Those in the audience—if the accounts in the *Vida y fin* are to be believed—included Cisneros, Charles V, and even Inquisitors (*Vida y fin*, 11, fol. 58v).

[19] Pedro Sainz Rodríguez, *La siembra mística del Cardenal Cisneros y las reformas en la iglesia* (Madrid, 1979), pp. 43–50.

[20] She was removed as abbess for a period of time while the accusations of mismanagement and nepotism were reviewed (Surtz, *Guitar of God*, p. 5).

[21] García Andrés, "Introduction," pp. 131–70.

[22] García Andrés, "Introduction," p. 96.

[23] The history is complex. The *Conhorte* was examined in 1558, but there are no documents related to a specific condemnation of the work (García Andrés, "Introduction," pp. 97–100). The Escorial manuscript bears traces of the heavy hand of an Inquisitorial censor, yet within ten years the expurgated sections were approved in full by another reader (Surtz, *Guitar of God*, p. 8).

grown heresy—it would seem as though Juana's visions (as remarkably picturesque and original as they seem on the surface, in their dramatic rendition of heaven's frequent festivals) could only have been accepted if her fundamental theology was fully orthodox. Given the critical importance of orthodoxy for her continued liberty to preach, Juana's emphasis on the Virgin might seem surprising to a Protestant audience unused to Marian devotion or to medievalist scholars accustomed to the overwhelming focus on the life and person of Christ common throughout Europe in the late Middle Ages. I suggest that it was the unique Spanish context of fervent Marian devotion which permitted Juana to emphasize her orthodoxy by paying as much attention to the mother of God as she does to the Son.

Authorship and Authority in the Transcription of the Sermons

The claim of a divine source for Juana's visions at once marks her as an authority and erases her individuality. If God (as Christ, as Spirit, or as Juana's guardian angel, depending on the sermon or vision) speaks through Juana, then what comes from Juana's mouth has divine authority; and yet, she as human has none. The question is further complicated by the assertion that her authority comes from the visions Juana is seeing (thus elevating her human role), yet what Juana is experiencing is being described aloud by the divine narrator using her voice box. Finally, the record we have of these events comes from a listener and amanuensis, not Juana herself. These intersecting complexities need to be examined in full in order to consider how Juana lived out her vocation as visionary preacher, before we can turn to an analysis showing that it was Juana's association with the Virgin Mary which provided critical authority for her visionary experience.

The date of 1509 is traditionally given to the sermon cycle transcribed by María Evangelista in the *Conhorte*. However, recent scholars have noted that references to political events and other internal evidence indicate that at least some of the 72 sermons date from between 1517–23.[24] These sermons are ascribed to the voice of Christ ("dijo el

[24] Given that Juana preached over a period of 13 years (*Vida y fin*, 3, fol. 13r; *Libro de la casa*, fol. 20v), it is possible that the text records late sermons rather than early ones, especially since several seem to be conglomerations of two or more partial

Señor…") and typically take the form of Jesus describing a festival or pageant cycle in heaven related either to the feast day or to the Gospel passage for that Sunday. During these feasts, Christ invites both the angels and the beatified to eat bountiful food and expensive liquors that spring forth, often miraculously, from the cup of His blood or from the wounds on His hands.[25] Often there is music and dancing, sometimes provided for Christ, sometimes by Christ.[26] At intervals, the feast will turn into a traveling festival, with Christ mounting a chariot and leading the song and dance down onto and across the earth.[27] Almost always, there are pageants or drawn-out allegorical plays (*figuras*) which represent through symbols a theological point made in the sermon. First Christ narrates the images and actions in the plays, then He interprets them, loading them with doctrinal significance.

We thus come to the thorny question of authorship and authority posed by *El Conhorte*, as Juana did not claim interpretative authority for herself in these sermons, nor did she actually write them down. The question of who is speaking the sermon is problematic even in the introduction. The first page of the manuscript is not a sermon, but rather an authorizing exercise for what is to follow: "Thus begins the book called Conhorte, which is made by the mouth of the Holy Spirit who was speaking in a religious woman elevated in contemplation, which talk was done in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ…"[28] Although Juana is here made the mouthpiece of God, yet she also participates in the experience, since she sees the pageants that Christ is describing to others by means of her ecstatic talks. To further complicate the question, the author of the first page of the manuscript quotes Christ's words to verify that Juana (and others) have seen the celestial pageants:

> And when the Lord was speaking of the things which follow, he said thusly: "You, girl, have you seen these various things and figures which

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sermons. See María Victoria Triviño, *Inspiración y ternura: sermones marianos de la Santa Juana (1481–1534)* (Madrid, 2006), p. xxi; and Pablo Maroto, "Santa Juana," p. 593.

[25] Among many examples, see Juana de la Cruz, *El Conhorte*, 1.4 (vol. 1, sermon 4), p. 343.

[26] For example, Juana de la Cruz, *El Conhorte*, 1.21, p. 740.

[27] Juana de la Cruz, *El Conhorte*, 2.42, p. 1049.

[28] See footnote 2.

> have been performed in the celestial realm and have appeared in the sight of some creatures in the presence of God himself?"[29]

Throughout the sermons, then, sometimes the description will be ascribed to Christ as at once participant and director of the pageant, whereas at other times pages of description will come without particular attribution, giving the impression of a human visionary narrating her experiences. Finally, although Christ is most typically referenced in the sermons, the *Vida y fin* and the *Libro de la casa* diversify the divine sources, sometimes attributing the wording to the Holy Spirit, or to Juana's personal guardian angel, Laruel.[30]

In addition to the question of who is speaking the sermons, the authorship of the written text is also problematic. Both local tradition and documentation from the canonization process identify the transcriber of the sermons as Sor María Evangelista, miraculously given the ability to write in order to function as Juana's scribe.[31] While in Juana's time claiming Christ's authorship for the *Conhorte* was an authorizing move which allowed her as a woman access to the traditionally male status of preacher, for us today her twin refusal of authorship and reliance on scribes problematizes the question of accuracy of our access to *her* words. Yet it is also a historical fact that the majority of scholarly and visionary texts from the Middle Ages were actually written down by secretaries or auditors. Many scholastic theologians were first influential through notes from their lectures circulated by their students, while major authorities from Aquinas to Hildegard of Bingen classically dictated their theology and visions. Women especially often had complex relationships to their texts, as indicated by the example of Angela of Foligno, whose dictations concerning her mystical experiences were later annotated and edited by Brother A, her scribe, before publication.[32] It is in fact rare for a medieval woman's text to come

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[29] "Y cuando el Señor hablaba estas cosas siguientes, decía así:—Tú, fulana, ¿has visto tales y tales cosas y figuras que se han hecho en el reino celestial y han parecido en ojos de algunas criaturas y en presencia del mismo Dios?" (Juana de la Cruz, *El Conhorte*, p. 227).

[30] On the Holy Spirit, see for example *Vida y fin*, 5, fol. 29v; for Laruel, *Libro de la casa*, fol. 16r.

[31] García Andrés, "Introduction," p. 19, citing Daza's biography, *Historia, vida y milagros, éxtasis y revelaciones de la bienaventurada virgen Sancta Juana de la Cruz* (Madrid, 1610).

[32] Angela of Foligno, *Complete Works*, trans. Paul Lachance (New York, 1993), p. 22.

down to us in a holograph manuscript—almost all were mediated through a confessor, scribe, editor, or Inquisitorial tribunal. Although we cannot be sure that the sermons we have are an exact record of Juana's voicing of Christ, we do in fact have as much access to Juana's wording as we do to any other woman's from her time period. For the purposes of this essay, I will describe the author as Juana, the historical speaker of the sermons, since ascribing the authorship to Christ is a theological position, while ascribing it to María Evangelista alone goes against the historical evidence that Juana did indeed preach for 13 years.

The Virgin in Spanish Devotional Life

Before detailing the importance of the Virgin in Juana's visionary experience, it is necessary to understand the Marian devotional climate in which Juana was raised. Juana and her fellow nuns professed at a convent dedicated to the Virgin, yet their vocations were no deviation from mainstream Castilian spirituality in the 15th and 16th centuries. The earliest days of the peninsular Reconquest saw an upsurge in devotional images of the Virgin and Child,[33] a growing understanding of Mary as the primary intercessor on behalf of crusading warriors,[34] and an interest in marking political conquest through the conversion of mosques to churches dedicated to the Virgin.[35] Nearly all the major authors whose works survive from the Spanish Middle Ages display an affinity for Marian devotion, whether in hymns of praise, reformulations of her lament at the foot of the cross, or accounts of her joys and sorrows.[36] Indeed, in the first decade of the 16th century, Franciscans

[33] Manuel Trens, *María: iconografía de la virgen en el arte español* (Madrid, 1946); and Clara Fernández-Ladreda, *Imaginería medieval mariana [en Navarra]* (Pamplona, 1988).

[34] While Santiago was believed to have miraculously interceded during the first battles of the Reconquest, during later battles, warriors believed that Mary fought on their side. See Angus MacKay, *La España de la Edad Media desde la frontera hasta el imperio, 1000–1500*, trans. Angus MacKay and Salustiano Moreta, 2nd ed. (Madrid, 1981), p. 209.

[35] Amy G. Remensnyder, "The Colonization of Sacred Architecture: The Virgin Mary, Mosques, and Temples in Medieval Spain and Early 16th-Century Mexico," in *Monks and Nuns, Saints and Outcasts: Religion in Medieval Society (Essays in Honor of Lester K. Little)*, ed. Sharon Farmer and Barbara Rosenwein (Ithaca, 2000), p. 195.

[36] For example, Alfonso el Sabio, *Songs of Holy Mary of Alfonso X, The Wise: A Translation of the* Cantigas de Santa Maria, trans. Kathleen Kulp-Hill (Tempe, 2000);

and Dominicans came to blows in the streets during the course of heated debates over the Immaculate Conception.[37]

In addition to the iconographic and theological significance ascribed to the Virgin in medieval Spain, the late medieval tradition of meditating on Christ's life and death took on a particularly Marian overtone in early modern Castilian vernacular treatises. Starting in the 13th century, Mary's lament at the foot of the cross had been a standard devotional interest, in part as a result of a long-standing interpretation connecting the sword of Simeon's prophecy (Luke 2:5, said to pierce Mary's heart) with the lance of Longinus.[38] For several centuries, authors across Europe produced Latin texts either retelling the *Lament of Mary* (*Planctus Mariae*) or incorporating ever more extensive laments and dialogue attributed to Mary into lengthy texts on the life of Christ (*Vita Christi*). By the 16th century, Castilian authors combined the *Vita Christi* tradition with the local fervor for the Virgin, composing meditation manuals focused on Holy Week alone (usually from Gethsemane to the entombment),[39] in which they narrated Christ's Passion with equal attention to Mary's pain, dividing every chapter in half between two protagonists in the "Passion of the Son *and* the Mother". As I have discussed elsewhere, this development of Mary's role in the Passion as equally fleshed out as that of Jesus does not occur so fully in texts written in other European countries, nor is

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Gonzalo de Berceo, "Los Milagros de Nuestra Señora," in *Obras completas*, vol. 2, ed. Brian Dutton (London, 1971); and Juan Ruiz, *Libro de buen amor*, trans. Raymond S. Willis (Princeton, 1972), verses 20–43, pp. 1635–49.

[37] Lesley K. Twomey, "'Cechs són aquells que tenen lo contrari': Fanatical Condemnation of Opponents of the Immaculate Conception in 15th-Century Valencia," in *Faith and Fanaticism: Religious Fervor in Early Modern Spain* (Brookfield, 1997), pp. 23–35.

[38] See, among others, Ogier of Locedio (Pseudo-Bernard), "Meditation by Bernard on the Lamentation of the Blessed Virgin (*Meditacio Bernardi de lamentacione beate virginis*)," in *Texts of the Passion: Latin Devotional Literature and Medieval Society*, ed. Thomas Bestul (Philadelphia, 1996), pp. 175, 185; Pseudo-Bonaventure, *Meditations on the Life of Christ: An Illustrated Manuscript of the Fourteenth Century*, ed. Isa Ragusa and Rosalie B. Green, trans. Isa Ragusa (Princeton, 1961), pp. lxxx, 340; and Ludolph of Saxony, *The Hours of the Passion: Taken From The Life of Christ by Ludolph the Saxon*, trans. Henry James Coleridge, Quarterly Series 59 (London, 1887), p. 376.

[39] An example of these meditation manuals would be *Fasciculus myrrhe: el qual trata de la passion de nuestro redemptor Jesu Christo*. Meseguer Fernández lists edition information for the *Fasciculus myrrhe* dating to 1511, 1515, and 1531 (all from Burgos), in addition to a Sevilla 1524 edition. See Juan Meseguer Fernández, "Passio duorum: autores-ediciones-la obra," *Archivo ibero-americano* 29 (1969): 217–68, at p. 226, n. 31.

it found in manuscript or published texts before 1500 in Castille.[40] In the early decades of the 16th century in Castille, then, Mary's role in popular devotion was not only highly prominent, but also integrally linked with the Passion of Christ. It thus seems imperative to examine the Mariology of any early modern Castilian mystic who has been identified primarily as Christocentric, as the two topics were inextricably linked in peninsular spirituality.

Juana and the Virgin: A Spanish Marian Life

Juana understood the trajectory of her own career primarily in relation to Mary, not Christ, the Trinity, or the Church. The majority of our information on Juana's life comes from the odd conglomeration of biography / autobiography found in the *Vida y fin*, dictated to her amanuensis María Evangelista towards the end of her life, yet clearly containing material which Juana could not have presented (such as her own funeral details). Little is historically verifiable beyond a "bare bones" outline. After Juana's profession at the Convent of Santa María de Cubas, she moved up through the ranks, holding nearly every manual job or position of authority. She was named abbess in 1509 and lobbied Spanish prelates and Rome on behalf of her convent. The position was taken away from her for a time as a result of internal strife among the nuns, then returned to her despite a degenerative bone illness which kept her confined to a chair or her bed until her death in 1534.[41] In contradistinction to a modern historian's interest in verifiable, worldly facts, most of the semi-autobiographical *Vida y fin* concerns Juana's interaction with the divine, not with people and events on earth. The value of the *Vida y fin* for historians is instead that her self-narration provides historical information as to what Juana and her amanuensis deemed essential to her public image. This public image is intimately related to the Marian orientation of her convent. Juana's belief that her life was the result of decisions made for her by God and

[40] The full argument appears in Jessica A. Boon, "The Agony of the Virgin: The Swoons and Crucifixion of Mary in Sixteenth-Century Castilian Passion Treatises," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 38 (2007): 3–26.

[41] This episode is discussed more fully in Surtz, *Guitar of God*, pp. 4–5; and García Andrés, "Introduction," pp. 22–24.

Mary (not her own plan) is of critical importance to an analysis of her choices of authorizing stances.

Two moments of divine-human interaction led her to profess at the local *beaterio*, Santa María de la Cruz. As narrated in the *Vida y fin*, the first incident was initiated by the divine, for in the 1480s Mary in heaven pleaded with the Trinity to provide a leader who would reinvigorate the failing convent dedicated to her. God granted Mary's wish by turning Juana (still in the womb of her mother, 1481) from male to female, leaving only a prominent Adam's apple as trace of her original form.[42] The second crucial moment for Juana's career came as a result of human devotion and divine response. When Juana fell desperately ill at some point in her infancy, her mother promised the Virgin that if her daughter were cured, she would take her child's weight in candles and perform a vigil in the chapel at the Cubas convent. Once Juana was out of danger, however, Juana's mother failed to fulfill her vow, nor did her husband accomplish it years later after her mother passed away.[43] As a result, Juana felt a sense of unfulfilled obligation to the Cubas institution.

A notable (and probably historical)[44] sequence of events led to Juana's entrance into convent life. In 1497, she fled an arranged marriage with a local nobleman by disguising herself as a man, only changing back to women's clothing at the door of the convent.[45] It was to the Convent of Santa María de Cubas that Juana resorted for protection in order to accomplish her personal vow of virginity. Although the *beatas* at first questioned Juana's right to profess because she lacked the

[42] *Vida y fin*, 1, fol. 2v; discussed in Surtz, *Guitar of God*, p. 6. According to this opening, her leadership of the convent was foreordained, though it is interesting that this leadership was made possible by God's manipulation of his devotee's body at the foundational level of gender assignment. The Adam's apple was left as a sign of the miracle of Juana's divine election.

[43] *Vida y fin*, 1, fols 3r–v; discussed in Triviño, *Inspiración y ternura*, p. xiv.

[44] On the one hand, the story is so striking that it seems unlikely Juana would make up what would have been remembered by other nuns who had been there during her arrival. On the other hand, the story is typically hagiographical, with parallels to the late-night flight of Clare of Assisi, founder of Juana's order, among others. See Joan Mueller, *The Privilege of Poverty: Clare of Assisi, Agnes of Prague, and the Struggle for a Franciscan Rule for Women* (University Park, 2006), pp. 1–2, 6–7. Cristina Markyate's flight from an arranged marriage most closely parallels Juana's tale. See Valerie R. Hotchkiss, *Clothes Make the Man: Female Cross-Dressing in Medieval Europe* (New York, 2001), pp. 15–16.

[45] *Vida y fin*, 3, fols 10v–12r.

consent of her parents,[46] Juana's version in her autobiography puts much more emphasis on divine consent to her profession. She describes a Marian image at the porter's entrance that spoke directly to her as she was waiting to be allowed in. Mary told her: "Congratulations, my daughter, you are welcome to my house. Enter in happily, as you were raised for this."[47] Juana thus articulates her flight to Santa María de Cubas as part of a divinely foreordained sequence that began with the gender transposition God made in response to Mary's request on behalf of the convent. According to the text in which Juana presents her official interpretation of her own vocation, Mary both initiated and blessed Juana's monastic life.

In addition to Mary's pivotal role in Juana's profession, Marian imagery is portrayed as miraculous in both the *Vida y fin* and the *Libro de la casa*, intervening over and over in Juana's life as proof to others of her sanctity. For example, both manuscripts record the great discord that arose over the renovation of the convent's most venerated and antique image of the Virgin. Many of the nuns were greatly upset over the changes introduced in the image by the artist assigned its restoration. The scandal only died down after Juana received a revelation that God preferred the image be ugly to ensure it was being honored not for its beauty, but for its reminder of Mary as intercessor in heaven.[48] This episode, one of a handful found in both manuscripts, not only clarifies the centrality of Marian devotion (nuns wept over the changes to her image); it also emphasizes the real-life value of Juana's visions in convent life (they functioned to provide eternal theological truths). They likewise served as a medium for God or Mary to ratify or influence change in the daily life of the convent.

Other episodes relating to Marian imagery abound. The author of the *Libro de la casa* records a number of specific liturgical rituals instituted by Juana in relation to various statues of Mary placed around the convent, rituals which if performed properly would save a certain number of souls from purgatory or cure illness.[49] A different kind of ritual is associated with the confraternity *del cielo*, established by Juana

[46] *Vida y fin*, 3, fol. 12v.

[47] "Entonces la sancta imagen la hablo disiendole ennorabuena seays venida hija a esta mi casa entra en ella alegremente pues para ella fuystes criada" (*Vida y fin*, 3, fol. 12r).

[48] *Vida y fin*, 26, fol. 199v; *Libro de la casa*, fols 44v–45r.

[49] *Libro de la casa*, fols 48v–52v, includes a long list of images in the convent (some Marian, some not) and what devotional steps will produce which effect.

to honor the Immaculate Conception with a membership of nine living nuns and nine dead saints.[50] In the course of their devotions, including a procession internal to the convent in which the nuns carried sweets and pastries to offer to a Marian icon, the icon spoke directly to the nuns about the founding of the confraternity.[51] In all these cases, devotional activity on the part of the nuns inspires a response from the icon itself, either in the world (through miracles or dialogue with the icon) or in heaven (through the diminishing of purgatorial punishment). Juana's life experience and the devotional customs she instituted for the convent thus demonstrate the efficacy of Marian imagery.

In addition, Mary played a direct role in Juana's visionary experiences by appearing to Juana in several episodes in ways that allowed her to acquire authority for herself in the daily concerns of the convent. After one vision, Juana was able to assure a nun who had sewn a purse for the Virgin that Mary carried the purse with her.[52] Another time, a nun who wrote a devotional letter to Mary used Juana's guardian angel Laruel as a postmaster. Juana then watched Mary read the letter and weep with joy over it.[53] Through the medium of Juana's visions, the nuns knew that Mary continued to keep watch over the convent, as both the *Vida y fin* and the *Libro de la casa* record her arrival to bless the fields, providing a day when souls devoted to Mary could take a break from purgatory and come celebrate her arrival at the convent.[54] Juana even experienced a Marian vision proving that her choice to appoint her brother as the convent's vicar was not nepotism: Mary and the angels dressed her brother in all-white vestments, thus acknowledging his purity and fitness for the task.[55]

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[50] "Puedan entra en la cofradia nueve personas vivas, y nueve difuntas. An de nombrar nueve santos por abagados. Estan obligadas las cofradas a rezar el officio de Nuestra Señora" (*Libro de la casa*, fol. 41r).

[51] *Libro de la casa*, fols 40v–41r.

[52] *Libro de la casa*, fol. 22r.

[53] *Libro de la casa*, fol. 16v.

[54] *Vida y fin*, 23, fol. 112r; *Libro de la casa*, fol. 35r. Fundamentally, the nuns who composed the *Libro de la casa* still understood the convent as Mary's arena. For example, they included a description of one of Juana's visions (not found in the sermons) in which the Virgin and various saints took on the major positions of power in the convent: the Virgin was abbess; her mother Ann was vicar; Mary Magdalene was the gatekeeper (*tornera*); the founder of the convent, Iñes, was a laborer, etc. (*Libro de la casa*, fol. 30r).

[55] *Vida y fin*, 14, fols 75r–76v.

Beyond the authority Mary lent to Juana for her leadership, Mary also took an active part in Juana's spiritual life. In most of the visions in which she appeared, Mary was the medium through which Juana accessed Christ. Mary ratified Juana's ascent to better jobs by showing up at the *torno* (window by which goods from the outside world could be passed into a cloistered convent—Juana's job as *tornera* was a trusted position); yet Juana specified that Mary had thought the *torno* was a cradle which would pacify her infant son to sleep.[56] Juana's authority in the convent was confirmed in the process. Yet at the same time, the experience provided a way for Juana to be in direct proximity to Christ himself. In another example of Mary's mediation between Juana and Christ—in a vision reminiscent of Catherine of Siena's nuptials with the baby Jesus—Mary was the marriage-broker between her infant son and Juana in a holy marriage.[57] In contrast to the late medieval artistic renditions of Mary as the background to Catherine of Siena's nuptials[58] (in which Mary holds the baby Christ who reaches towards Catherine with a ring), Juana described Mary as actively supplying the ring for the ceremony by removing one of her own precious jewels.[59] Thus Mary provided the icon, the signifier which marked the spousal connection between Jesus and Juana. As can be seen from these examples, Juana's Christocentric life experiences were almost always mediated by the Virgin (again, a form of devotion that fit easily into the Iberian context, whereas it might have marked her as unorthodox had she lived in another part of Europe). Given the critical importance of the Virgin for Juana's vocation, authority, and access to Christ in her visions, it is of great interest to determine what role the Virgin played in Juana's ability to preach during the most sacred, most Christ-centered time of the liturgical year: Holy Week.

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[56] *Libro de la casa*, fol. 24v.

[57] *Vida y fin*, 5, fols 26v–27r.

[58] Such as the paintings by Giovanni di Paulo (c. 1460) or Fra Bartolomeo (1511).

[59] *Vida y fin*, 5, fols 26r–27r. In fact, Mary dropped the ring after taking it off her finger. The convent's confessor found it on the ground where Juana had been standing during the reception of the vision.

The Pageantry of Holy Week: Mariological Authority to Interpret Christ's Passion

Among the 72 sermons recorded in *El Conhorte*, we have a full cycle that includes each of the festival days of Holy Week. As unprecedented as it was for a woman to preach at any time, for a woman to do so during the most sacred events of the liturgical year may well have presented even more difficulties. The story of the Passion was better known to a lay audience than any other story from either Testament, and the theology surrounding the Passion was of primary concern to a clerical audience. Thus the five sermons during Holy Week would have been the ultimate test case for Juana's orthodoxy. I suggest that, considering the constraints surrounding any interpretation of the Passion cycle, Juana intentionally conventionalizes the presence of ideas and techniques such as the *figuras* which could be ascribed entirely to her as an individual. Without the *figuras* dominating the descriptive parts of the sermon, however, the theme that emerges is the co-Passion of Mary alongside her Son. Here, Juana can be innovative in the guise of extending local Marian traditions, as her awareness of audience expectations allows her to exercise freedom without compromising her authority.

The two main innovations in Juana's sermons—her extensions of the Biblical stories and her description of heavenly pageants—are both present in the cycle on Holy Week. In comparison with other sermons, however, the five sermons for Palm Sunday, Holy Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter (sermons 16–20) are much more concentrated on the biblical narrative, while the heavenly pageants are secondary. Juana narrates Jesus's history from the time he enters Jerusalem until His Resurrection by conglomerating all four Gospels into a synthesis which demonstrates the temporal continuity of the four accounts. Thus this reconstruction of the Holy Week events functions as strong proof of Juana's orthodoxy and authority. Either Juana is parading her knowledge of and faithfulness to Scripture, or else God (through Juana) is reaffirming the fundamental truth of all four accounts of the Passion, since it proves possible to retell the story as one narrative without altering the progression of events told in any one of the various Gospels.

Considering the space given over to an action-filled account of the Passion, it is not surprising that the *figuras*, or heavenly allegorical

pageants, play a relatively small role in the Semana Santa cycle.[60] Nor do the few pageants which are described in these sermons serve quite the same function as they do elsewhere in her writings, such as adding new information or explaining doctrine. Rather, they serve primarily to promote the actual practices observed during Holy Week in the church of Juana's day. The festival in the Palm Sunday sermon, although far more resplendent than any human festival could be, mimics to a certain extent the ritual on earth, for the angels and saints process with palms towards Christ, in a manner reminiscent of the processions of the Catholic faithful around the church or through the streets.[61] Emphasizing still further the contemporary devotional impact intended for these sermons, the Maundy Thursday sermon's first figure is of Christ descending to earth to see how well or badly He is being worshipped in His churches by human congregations.[62] The only day of Holy Week which includes significant *figuras* is Holy Wednesday, an important day in the church calendar which nevertheless has fewer prescribed ritual observances than the other festival days, thus providing less automatic material to a sermon writer. The pageants for Holy Week are therefore not nearly as original or separate from the norm of everyday human religious experience as are most of the *figuras* in Juana's other sermons. They are instead conservative, functioning primarily to ratify ritual observances in the medieval church.

Although the innovation of *figuras* plays only a small part in Juana's sermons on Holy Week, innovation itself remains key in these visions. Juana's elaboration of the role of the Virgin Mary during Holy Week comes through clearly in the extended appearances the Virgin Mary makes in the sermons for Palm Sunday, Holy Wednesday and Good Friday. A closer look at the Virgin's actions on these days serves not only to highlight the local beliefs and practices regarding Marian devotion, but also to provide a chance to examine the more intangible question of how those local beliefs and practices are played upon by Juana (or by God) to reinforce the authority of her statements.

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[60] The sermon for Good Friday has no *figura* at all (Juana de la Cruz, *El Conhorte*, 1.19, pp. 661–63). The only *figura* in the Easter sermon is a description of a joyous festival in the sky which does not function as an allegory, but rather as a reflection of the joy all (including the human faithful) should feel on such a day (Juana de la Cruz, *El Conhorte*, 1.20, pp. 707–15).

[61] Juana de la Cruz, *El Conhorte*, 1.16, pp. 599–601.

[62] Juana de la Cruz, *El Conhorte*, 1.18, pp. 646–47.

Unlike Juana's faithful sequencing of events in Jesus's life (she only discusses an event of the Passion out of order once, and in that instance she in fact repeats her discussion at the correct moment),[63] Juana jumps ahead of herself temporally in the course of the Palm Sunday service to describe Mary's actions on Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week. Juana presents as fact that the Virgin Mary had a dream on Tuesday night about Jesus's coming Passion. In the dream, Mary witnesses all the details of His torture quite explicitly, to the point that the lance thrust in His side is described as penetrating so far that it split Jesus's heart in three.[64] When Mary wakes up and rejoices that Jesus is still alive, He is obliged to inform her that her dream was not simply a dream, but rather a revelation. This dream sequence confirms several important points. First, Mary is shown to have foreknowledge of the Passion, a mark of divine origin which helps support the Mariological claim (stated clearly in the Palm Sunday sermon) that Mary had been designated from the beginning of time (*ab eterno*) to be Jesus's mother.[65] Thus Juana enters briefly into the extended theological debates about the role of Mary in relation to the Godhead, a debate which she presents in much more detail in her sermon on the Immaculate Conception (number 70).[66] This foreknowledge also validates scenes in earlier sermons in the collection about Christ's birth and early years, in which the angels inform Mary of the eventual Passion of her Son, thus causing her to live a life in perpetual anticipation of His death.[67] In this sermon, however, her awareness of the impending event that she has feared for 30 years is brought about by Christ Himself, not His angelic emissaries. For Mary to receive a revelation concerning His fate (not just witness it in surprise) indicates that her foreknowledge was considered critical to the narrative sequence. Apparently, the events of Holy Week cannot be fully understood without the mediation of a participant who has full knowledge of what is to come.

Secondly, the importance of the dream lies in its links to another episode described in the sermon. On Palm Sunday itself, Mary has a presentiment that Jesus will die in Jerusalem. She pleads with the

[63] Juana repeats the Gethsemane plea on both Holy Wednesday and Maundy Thursday. See Juana de la Cruz, *El Conhorte*, 1.17, p. 620, and 1.18, p. 654.

[64] "[T]an grande era la lanzada que os daban, que os partieron el corazón en tres partes" (Juana de la Cruz, *El Conhorte*, 1.16, p. 610).

[65] The *ab eterno* claim appears in Juana de la Cruz, *El Conhorte*, 1.16, p. 608.

[66] Juana de la Cruz, *El Conhorte*, 2.70, pp. 1417–32.

[67] I.e. Juana de la Cruz, *El Conhorte*, 1.2, p. 263.

Archangel Gabriel to intercede for her with God to spare her Son.[68] Thus, despite the mention of Mary as *ab eterno* predestined to be the mother of Jesus, Juana depicts Mary primarily in her human dimension, rather than in her regal role as intercessor for all humankind. Indeed, she is imagined as a human rather like Juana herself, who throughout her life had continuing discussions with the angel Laruel. The scene therefore serves to underscore the possibility that Juana's claims are true, since if Mary in her humanity talked with angels and was given revelations by God in dreams and discussions, then Juana's claims about her experience are that much more plausible. This potential parallel between Juana's and the Virgin's access to divine revelation will prove key to assessing the significance of Mary's role in Christ's Passion.

Leading up to Good Friday, Mary discusses her revelatory dream with Jesus, is at His side during the Last Supper,[69] and even runs into Jesus on the streets of Jerusalem on His last day of preaching, at which point her grief so upsets Him that He orders her from His presence.[70] On Good Friday, however, Mary's role increases dramatically. Far from simply crossing paths with Jesus at odd moments, she ends up being the co-protagonist in the narrative. Although Juana's sermon consists in part of a detailed description of the sufferings of Christ at the hands of Pilate and on the road to Calvary (complete with bloody dripping wounds),[71] she spends an equal amount of time tracing Mary's actions throughout the day, implicitly asserting that the course of events on Good Friday for Mary was parallel in all respects to the course of events at the Passion of her Son.[72]

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[68] Juana de la Cruz, *El Conhorte*, 1.16, p. 605. Gabriel and Mary have a special connection due to the Annunciation. Juana often represents Gabriel and Mary in conversation, or uses Gabriel as a character in *figuras* that prove her immaculacy. See Juana de la Cruz, *El Conhorte*, 1.1, pp. 246–47.

[69] Juana de la Cruz, *El Conhorte*, 1.18, p. 650.

[70] Juana de la Cruz, *El Conhorte*, 1.17, pp. 640–41.

[71] Especially Juana de la Cruz, *El Conhorte*, 1.19, pp. 664–69.

[72] Indeed, this parallelism was prefigured as early as the Palm Sunday sermon, when Mary—upset about not hearing of Jesus's journey to Jerusalem and therefore missing the event—is informed by two full choirs of angels that the two kinds of donkeys on which Jesus had ridden during His entrance were a symbol of Jesus's and Mary's double entrance into the city. Juana's sermon makes the claim that the phrase "el Señor tiene necessidad de él"—sometimes read as a defense of the appropriation of a bystander's donkey—is actually meant to be understood as signifying "el Señor ha menester esta Virgen" (Juana de la Cruz, *El Conhorte*, 1.16, p. 607).

This parallelism is found in the fact that Mary is shown en route to Calvary in several paragraphs which inform us of her sufferings and worries along the road.[73] This journey culminates at the foot of the cross, where Mary appears to suffer the Passion along with Jesus in two ways. Upon her arrival at Calvary, Mary pleads with the Jews to release her Son and crucify her instead,[74] thus to all intents and purposes offering herself as a willing sacrifice (as had Jesus). Later, ignoring the Jews' threats to kill her as well as Him, she remains at the foot of the cross. Shortly after the Gospel episode of being commended to the disciple's care, she leans forward to embrace Jesus on the cross. Her action of pressing her body against His leads the narrator to comment that Mary was crucified in spirit exactly as He had been crucified in the flesh.[75]

What to make of these two actions, her offer of self-sacrifice and the pain-filled embrace? On the one hand, both additions to the Holy Week narrative are typical of Spanish Passion narratives of Juana's era, influenced by the 1503 Castilian translation of Ludolph of Saxony's *Life of Christ*, widely disseminated in Spain as the *Vita Christi cartujano*.[76] On the other hand, in Juana's version, Christ ratifies the co-protagonism of His mother, speaking as He hangs from the cross about her agony as though it mirrored His own death: "My powerful Father! Why have you abandoned me, that I and my mother die?"[77] Christ's words indicate that the inclusion of every one of the typical non-canonical scenes for Mary in the sermon is not haphazard, but instead is intended to create a parallelism between the two actants.

Such a parallelism flows easily from the scenes described above, in which Juana carefully marks Mary's foreknowledge of the Passion events to be essential (a point original to Juana, or to Christ's new revelation). In the absence of the *figuras* typical of Juana's other

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[73] Juana de la Cruz, *El Conhorte*, 1.19, pp. 667–68.

[74] Juana de la Cruz, *El Conhorte*, 1.19, p. 670.

[75] "Y cuando tornaba en sí, volvíase muy deprisa para donde estaba la cruz y Nuestro Señor Jesucristo puesto en ella, y abrazábase de aquel triste madero. Y juntaba su rostro y su boca con las astillas de él. Y así, dijo nuestro Redentor, era toda crucificada en el ánima, así como él lo era en el cuerpo" (Juana de la Cruz, *El Conhorte*, 1.19, p. 671).

[76] The Spanish translation was printed in Alcalá de Henares in 1502–03. It influenced such works as *Fasciculus myrrhe* (1511) and *Passio duorum* (1526). See Boon, "Agony of the Virgin," pp. 11–19.

[77] "¡Padre mío poderoso! ¿Por qué me has desamparado, que morimos yo y mi madre?" (Juana de la Cruz, *El Conhorte*, 1.19, p. 674).

sermons, it is the additions to the Gospel accounts which stand out for the audience; and it is Mary—either on her own, or through Christ's claims on her behalf—who receives the most elaboration. In the end, Juana's Holy Week sermons (perhaps the most likely to be critically examined by her auditors and readers, due to the familiarity of the Biblical narrative involved) derive their orthodoxy not only from a faithful rendering of the scriptural accounts, but also from a faithful importation of Marian devotion typical of Castille in general and of the supporters of the Marian convent in particular. If Juana received authority from Mary throughout her life at the convent, and if Mary has such an elevated role in the Gospel narrative as to be a co-actant in the Passion (and thus co-protagonist in the narrative of Christ's life), then it follows that Juana was able to have a powerful voice in her era. This was true not only because Christ's voice spoke through her, but also because Mary directly intervened in Juana's monastic career. The fact that this Marian devotion had been a main generator of Juana's claim to authority in her convent ever since the miracles accompanying her birth and her profession should allow us to recognize that although her sermons seem to derive their authority from Christ's narration, it is equally important to Juana's authoritative strategy that Christ's voice in her sermons advocates Mary's elevation in the Christian story. Thus Juana is the primary witness to Christ's new full disclosure of revelation as a direct consequence of her Marian identification, not apart from it.

JOHN OF THE CROSS, THE DIFFICULT ICON

Jane Ackerman

John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila have represented many things. Features of Teresa's life have been seen to validate current Western concerns about women.[1] Her name identifies a group, the Discalced, or Teresian, Carmelites. Her life reflects the values of her order to its members. When she was named a Doctor of the Church in 1970, her person and teachings assumed several more emblematic functions. Women who knew her in her own day responded to Teresa as a mother, a role she warmly fulfilled. During the early stages of the reform that she began, both she and John of the Cross were treated as signs of trouble.

The friar symbolized rebellion in his order for a while. He represented affront to authority a second time when, as a high-ranking member of the new governance structure of the Carmelite reform, he took public exception to his Discalced vicar general. Both times, John was handled as an offending sign. He was removed from view, much in the way that a disturbing public representation, such as a flag or poster, is torn down. After his death in 1591, the details of what he wrote concerning union with God led to ambivalence. An impression of similarity with teachings of the 16th-century *alumbrados* damaged the reputation of John's doctrine of divine union.[2] Carmelites leery of being linked through him with the hereticized group were reluctant to promote his works. What he was taken to stand for shifted again

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[1] See, for example, Alison Weber's study of Teresa's rhetorical strategies (*Teresa of Avila and the Rhetoric of Femininity* [Princeton, 1990]); Gillian Ahlgren's investigation of political pressures on Teresa's handling of authority (*Teresa of Avila and the Politics of Sanctity* [Ithaca and London, 1996]); and Carol Slade's reading of Teresa's works in light of concerns about constructing identity (*St. Teresa of Avila: Author of a Heroic Life* [Berkeley, 1995]).

[2] The Spanish *alumbrados* claimed to achieve substantial union with God, grasp of the mystery of the Trinity, and immunity from sin. The use of one of John's treatises by a circle of *alumbrados* in Seville led the Dominican Domingo Farfán to seek to have the work condemned by the Inquisition. In 1625, Inquisitors declared it to be orthodox (Alastair Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism in Sixteenth-Century Spain: The Alumbrados* [Toronto, 1992], p. 125).

in the 18th century. He was declared a saint in 1762. In 1926, he was named a Doctor of the Church. In the following decades, his works and the record of his life were used to buttress the claim that the Spanish soul is mystical.[3] The Spanish government named him the patron of Spanish poetry in 1952. Pope John Paul II renewed attention to that symbolic role in 1993.[4]

His writings and documented details of his life suggest that what John sought to signify often differed from the meanings assigned to him. How he encourages his readers to use his words to mediate meaning also differs from the ways he and his writings have been used to mediate it. Preachers, spiritual guides, and writers should not keep the attention of those who sought deeper relationship with God, he thought. They had another religious role to play with contemplatives than to be signs or models. John wanted his writing to affect the contemplative reader somewhat in the way in which an Eastern icon is designed to affect its viewer. In special moments that he believed were not under the control of the writer, words for the contemplative reading them could act like a frame, or perhaps a physical surface, through which to peer toward or into a reality beyond them. Neither he nor his words were a sufficient center of attention for the seeker, he insisted. They were not equivalent to the figures painted on an Eastern icon. Instead, John's written words were something more like the outside edge of the icon, orienting gaze, but disappearing from notice.

The way John handled himself as a writer conforms to what he generally encouraged spiritual directees to do with their own souls. The person seeking God became most free to do what attracted her when she was able to release preoccupation with what is now called the ego center but John called "the human heart that is attached to worldly things".[5] Relinquishing the grip on one's cares, possessions, achieve-

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[3] Proponents of this idea have included Ángel Ganivet, E. Allison Peers, Andrés González Blanco, and Manuel Gálvez (E. Allison Peers, "Notes on the Historical Problem of Castilian Mysticism," *Hispanic Review* 10.1 [1942]: 18–33).

[4] In *Acta apostolica sedes* 85 (1993): 552–53, cited in Keith Egan, "Dark Night: Education for Beauty," in Kevin Culligan and Regis Jordan, eds, *Carmel and Contemplation* (Carmelite Studies) 8 (Washington, D.C., 2000), p. 245.

[5] "El corazón aficionado y apegado a las cosas del mundo" (*Ascent*, 1.2.2). John uses an arsenal of descriptive words for this major impediment to transformation. Many convey the idea of loosening or freeing. For example the advancing soul proceeds "without support or foothold" ("sin hallar arrimo y pie") ("Not for All the Beauty," stanza 6) or becomes detached and cleans itself of what has clung to it (*Sayings of Light and Love*, 22). Spanish quotations of John's works come from San Juan de la Cruz,

ments, and knowledge as a center of meaning freed the contemplative to become engaged in a reciprocal relationship with God.

Modestly shadowing that process of self-abandonment, the spiritual writer's best way of mediating meaning was to orient the seeker in a way that did not encumber the reader's attention. What it was that drew the seeker's mind forward, John insisted, was not any portrait of spiritual life portrayed by human words. Instead, what beckoned the mind and will forward was an unfolding "portrait painted in the soul" of the attributes of God, as the Holy Spirit remodeled the human capacities of the seeker and then engaged them. As far as any teaching role was concerned, the spiritual guide or writer would do best by releasing the contemplative into exploration, allowing the seeker's attention to slip into the journey itself.

All for God

Learning in monastic life was undertaken to increase desire for God.[6] John's campaign to spur those under his guidance to reach toward God ran throughout his teaching career. Contemplation was a process of discovery. Any tarrying with anything less than God, no matter how good, was insufficient to the goal. Teresa wrote in an epigrammatic poem for the nuns under her care: "sólo Dios basta" (only God is enough). Creation was a rich banquet of means, ripe with temporary communicative power and always at hand. Anything could spur the contemplative toward her Creator.

Surviving letters show John at work orienting the will and attention of readers toward God. In a 1581 letter, he remarks to the nun Catalina de Jesús, whom he thinks may be separate from Teresa and may miss the charismatic foundress, that "I, too, am abandoned and alone" in southern Spain, so far from his homeland of Castille, but in that, "God has done well…abandonment is a steel file."[7]

Obras completas, ed. Lucinio Ruano de la Iglesia, 11th ed. (Madrid, 1982). Quotations in English are from John of the Cross, *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez (Washington, D.C., 1991). Critical editions and translations of John's writing use standard numbering to identify subdivisions, paragraphs, and stanzas. These numbers will be used, set off by periods.

[6] Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture* (1961; repr. New York, 2000).

[7] "Desterrado estoy y solo…Dios lo hizo bien, pues, en fin, es lima el desamparo" (Letter 1).

The friar corresponded for years with the women's community at Beas which he had served as confessor from 1579 to 1581. In 1586 he assured the group that he thought about their spiritual welfare. The following year he explained that although the letter they had sent him some time before gave him great comfort, he had decided not to respond to it:

> My failure to write was not due to any unwillingness, for indeed I desire your great good, but to my belief that enough has already been said and written for doing what is important; and that what is wanting, if anything is wanting, is not writing or speaking—rather these usually superabound—but silence and work. Furthermore, speaking distracts one, while silence and work recollects and strengthens the spirit.[8]

John was not characterizing all human companionship. The Discalced women at Beas had made a commitment to contemplative relation with God when they joined the Carmelite Order, which from its inception emphasized solitary prayer. When they signed on for Teresa's reform, they opted for additional solitary time, for a smaller community size, for more enclosure, and for increased poverty, all of which reduced ordinary social contacts and added time for focus on God. Silence in reform houses was also enhanced: "[o]nce individuals know what has been told them for their benefit, they no longer need to hear or speak, but to put it into practice, silently and carefully and in humility and charity and contempt of self," John wrote to the nuns at Beas.[9]

The friar has little to say about his own life in his letters. Even after the events of June 1591, during which he had been stripped of administrative duties, and after a scandal-mongering inquiry about him had begun, John's comments about himself in letters are brief. In July he instructed the prioress María de la Encarnación: "Do not let what is happening to me, daughter, cause you any grief; for it does not cause me any."

Referring not to himself but to another leader in the reform, Jerónimo Gracián, whom he had defended in June against the Discalced

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[8] "El no haber escrito no ha sido falta de voluntad (porque de veras deseo su gran bien), sino parecerme que harto está ya dicho y escrito para obrar lo que importa; y que lo que falta (si algo falta) no es el escribir o el hablar, que esto antes ordinariamente sobra, sino el callar y obrar. Porque, demás desto, el hablar distrae, y el callar y obrar recoge y da fuerza al espíritu" (Letter 8).

[9] "Y así, luego que la persona sabe lo que han dicho para su aprovechamiento, ya no ha menester oír ni hablar más, sino obrarlo de veras con silencio y cuidado, en humildad y caridad y desprecio de sí" (Letter 8).

Vicar-General Nicolás Doria because he thought Gracián had been falsely accused, John continued: "What greatly grieves me is that the one who is not at fault is blamed." He led the prioress's attention beyond Gracián. The world was always a prompt: "Men do not do these things, but God, who knows what is suitable for us and arranges things for our good. Think nothing else but that God ordains all, and where there is no love, put love, and you will draw out love."[10]

John had not deadened himself to what was going on around him. In August of 1591, he commented that he preferred the simple task of shelling chickpeas, "mute creatures, better than being badly handled by living ones."[11] References to the heat which easily rises above 35 degrees Celsius in southern Spain in late summer, and to not feeling well, appear in a letter written about the same time. The infection that he had contracted worsened over the following months. He died of it in the first days of December 1591 in a monastery whose members had heard accusations about him, but who did not know him personally.

In October or November he wrote from the monastery, instructing a Discalced friar not to grieve over how he was being treated: "for they cannot take the habit from me save for being incorrigible or disobedient. I am very ready to amend all I may have done wrong and obey in whatever penance they may give me."[12] In the same period he reminded a Discalced nun that the transformation in love he discussed in his treatises was not intended for the privacy of the cell: "Have a great love for those who contradict and fail to love you, for in this way love is begotten in a heart that has no love." He ended by reminding her of the message of 1 John 4:19: "God so acts with us, for he loves us that we might love by means of the very love He bears toward us."[13]

Kieran Kavanaugh remarks that from first to last, the friar's poems and treatises show "a doctrinal synthesis of the spiritual life that was

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[10] "De lo que a mí toca, hija, no le dé pena, que ninguna a mí me da. De lo que la tengo muy grande es de que se eche culpa a quien no la tiene…Estas cosas no las hacen los hombres, sino Dios, que sabe lo que nos conviene y las ordena para nuestra bien. No piense otra cosa sino que todo lo ordena Dios. Y adonde no hay amor, ponga el amor, y sacará el amor" (Letter 27).

[11] "Criaturas mudas, mejor que no ser manoseados de las vivas" (Letter 28).

[12] "Porque el hábito no me lo pueden quitar sino por incorregible o inobediente, y yo estoy muy aparejado para enmendarme de todo lo que hubiere errado y para obedecer en cualquiera penitencia que me dieren" (Letter 32).

[13] "Ame mucho a los que la contradicen y no la aman, porque en eso se engendra amor en el pecho donde no le hay; como hace Dios con nosotros, que nos ama para que le amemos mediante el amor que nos tiene" (Letter 33).

substantially complete in his mind once he began to write."[14] John lived in a general culture that still trusted that elements of the cosmos corresponded to each other. Faith in a coherent world that reflected God's powers and nature was coming under strain in places but still held firm inside the walls of contemplative monastic communities. John sought to live what he taught. In light of these coherences, it is not surprising that the narrative trajectories of his poetry and instructions that John gives his readers regarding how to use his words dovetail with his teaching that perception shifts from the self to what lies beyond it.[15]

Some of his lyrics describe self-abandonment. The speaker in the enigmatic "Spiritual Canticle" says twice that she went out in search of her Beloved. Finding him, she gave herself to him completely.[16] In "Stanzas Concerning an Ecstasy Experienced in High Contemplation", the speaker remembers that when she relinquished herself, she was filled with paradoxical knowledge. The verb for self-abandonment that John chooses in "Stanzas" is *desfallecerse*, to weaken or faint away: "He who truly arrives there / faints away from himself," like a voice trailing away into silence.[17]

In "The Dark Night", written perhaps in the same year as "The Spiritual Canticle", the speaking soul remembers that in her Beloved's embrace "everything ceased, and I left myself / leaving my cares / forgotten among the lilies."[18] Several commentators have remarked that seeing the lovers in the mind's eye as one reads "The Dark Night" loses the support of poetic description at the very moment in which the speaker describes release of herself into her Beloved's arms. John expected the audience of his poem to be Discalced Carmelite "beginners" and "proficients" in contemplative prayer.[19] These already trusted that God mysteriously drew them toward Him, beyond what they could see.

Several of John's lyrics suggest details of what might happen when the contemplative abandoned himself into intimacy with God. Giving

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[14] Kieran Kavanaugh, "Introduction," *Collected Works*, p. 33.

[15] Regarding this shift, see Louis Dupré, "The Christian Experience of Mystical Union," *The Journal of Religion* 69 (1989): 5–11.

[16] "And I gave myself to him, / keeping nothing back"; "Y yo le di de hecho / a mí, sin dejar cosa" (stanza 18).

[17] "El que allí llega de vero / de sí mismo desfallece" (stanza 4).

[18] "Cesó todo y dejéme / dejando mi cuidado / entre las azucenas olvidado" (stanza 8).

[19] *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, prologue.9. See also *Spiritual Canticle*, prologue.3.

itself fully into the care of the Holy Spirit, John says the soul may be brought to perfection, which he also calls union, both terms referring not to a state of repose, but to an endless exchange of love between the seeker and God. The soul of the contemplative thanks its Spouse for the gifts of knowledge and love that it has received in union, then happily gives back to God the loving knowledge it has received.[20]

The "Stanzas" suggest that ecstasy is a watershed. Old self-view disappears during self-abandonment: "I didn't know where I was / but when I saw myself there / without knowing where I was / I understood great things", says the speaker in the "Stanzas."[21] New perceptions and actions animate the person: "All that he knew before / now seems worthless, / and now his knowledge so soars / that he is left in unknowing, / transcending all knowledge."[22] The soul in "Spiritual Canticle" declares that it now lives for its Beloved. All of its assets (or plenitude: *caudal*) are now in its Beloved's service.

How did John understand his role in communicating these matters? Prologues to his treatises, coupled with remarks on obstacles that the spiritual director may create for directees, as well as comments on the usefulness of religious images and preachers to the contemplative, suggest that the friar understood that he ought to be a disappearing cipher to those who sought intimacy with God.[23] His words were of passing and variable use to the seeker, he said. The true teacher of the soul was God in the operation of the Holy Spirit. Souls in John's poems say they abandoned themselves as they stretched toward the One whom they loved. The spiritual seeker's reading attention likewise ought not to cling to the words of John's treatises, but slip on toward what was beyond them.

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[20] *Living Flame of Love*, 3.1. See also *Flame* 1.17, 3.49 and 3.79–80; and *Spiritual Canticle*, 27.5 and 38.5. For a review of medieval discussions of the roles of love and knowledge in divine union, see Bernard McGinn, "Love, Knowledge and *Unio mystica* in the Western Christian Tradition," in Moshe Idel and Bernard McGinn, eds, *Mystical Union in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: An Ecumenical Dialog* (New York, 1999), pp. 59–86.

[21] "Yo no supe dónde estaba / pero, cuando allí me ví / sin saber dónde estaba / grandes cosas entendí" (stanza 1). See also *Flame*, 2.33.

[22] "Cuanto sabía primero / mucho bajo parece, / su ciencia tanto crece, / que se queda no sabiendo, / toda ciencia trascendiendo" (stanza 4).

[23] A mathematical cipher or zero, which has no value in itself, affects value when juxtaposed with numbers. John similarly seems to handle writing as having no independent meaningfulness, but as able to contribute to value afforded by God.

No human guide could convey what it mattered most to know. "A deeper enlightenment and wider experience than mine is necessary to explain the dark night through which the soul journeys toward that divine light of perfect union with God that is achieved, insofar as possible in this life, through love", John says in the prologue to the *Ascent of Mount Carmel*. Human understanding, which depended on concepts and images derived from the natural world, was not equipped to grasp what was so completely new to the perceiver:

> Nor does experience of them equip one to explain them. Only those who suffer them will know what this experience is like, but they won't be able to describe it. In discussing this dark night, therefore, I will not rely on experience or science, for these can fail and deceive us. Although I will not neglect whatever possible use I can make of them, my help in all that, with God's favor, I shall say, will be Sacred Scripture, at least in the most important matters, or those that are difficult to understand.[24]

These claims fence out the often-posed questions: how much of John's teaching concerning interior life arose from his own interior experiences? To what degree can his life be taken to emblematize, or for that matter, prove, what he teaches?

He repeatedly deflects his reader's attention past himself toward God, not only in the ground-clearing of his prologues, but from time to time in his treatises. *The Living Flame of Love*, for example, ends by mentioning, but not fully describing, the unending event that he calls the awakening of the Bridegroom and breathing of the Holy Spirit in the soul: "I do not desire to speak of this spiration…for I am aware of being incapable of doing so; and were I to try, it might seem less than it is." John ends by generally describing the soul filled by the Holy Spirit with good and glory "indescribably and incomprehensibly, in the depths of God."[25]

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[24] "Para haber de declarar y dar a entender esta noche oscura por la cual pasa el alma para llegar a la divina luz de la unión perfecta del amor de Dios cual se puede en esta vida, era menester otra mayor luz de ciencia y experiencia que la mía…Ni basta ciencia humana para lo saber de entender ni experiencia para lo saber decir; porque sólo el que por ello pasa lo sabrá sentir, mas no decir. Y, por tanto, para decir algo desta noche oscura, no fiaré ni de experiencia ni de ciencia, porque lo uno y lo otro puede faltar y engañar; mas, no dejándome de ayudar en lo que pudiere destas dos cosas, aprovecharme he para todo lo que con el favor divino hubiere de decir—a lo menos para lo más importante y oscuro de entender—de la divina Escritura" (*Subida*, prologue.1–2).

[25] "En la cual aspiración llena de bien y gloria y delicado amor de Dios para el alma yo no querría hablar, ni aun quiero, porque veo que no lo tengo de saber decir,

If contemplative readers of the treatises for which he is famous took John at his word that his own knowledge or experience would not help them, then what was the use of reading his works? Taken to its bottom line, his claim meant that whatever guided seekers into intimacy with God could not be human activity. In Plato's *Symposium*, conversation between friends assists the birth of wisdom in each conversation partner.[26] John seems to have rejected the notion that his life and personally chosen words could have any such influence on his readers. As he wrote to the nuns at Beas, words between human beings did have an initial usefulness, but thereafter became distractions.

He refuses to allow readers of the prologue to *Ascent of Mount Carmel* to settle into uncomplicated acceptance of his words as reliable signs. Having said that what they are about to examine cannot describe interior prayer, he seems then to reverse himself:

> With divine help we will discuss all this: how individuals should behave; what method the confessor should use in dealing with them; signs to recognize this purification of the soul that we call the dark night; whether it is the purification of the senses or the spirit; and how we can discern whether this affliction is caused by melancholia or some other deficiency of sense or spirit.[27]

The qualifier "with divine help" comes first; nevertheless John seems to have done a *volte face*: readers will be given insight into interior life after all. He makes a last adjustment, three paragraphs later. Although he says he will describe experiences of joy, affliction, hope, and sorrow of "those who follow God", the content of the *Ascent* describes neither the reader's process of transformation nor God, directly. Each person who wishes to reach purification of spirit will traverse her own road, something John's words cannot map because God handles each soul differently: "Our goal will be to explain, with God's help, all these points so that those who read this book will in some way discover the

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y parecería que ello es si lo dijese." Here the Holy Spirit fills the soul with good and glory "sobre toda lengua y sentido en los profundos de Dios" (*Flame*, 4.17). John refers again to the ineffability of the *spiration* (i.e. breathing) in *Spiritual Canticle*, 39.3.

[26] Plato, *Symposium*, 206. The arrangement of Plato's treatise as a dialogue among banquet partners also demonstrates the point.

[27] "De esto habemos de tratar adelante con el favor divino, y de cómo se ha de haber el alma entonces y el confesor con ella, y qué indicios habrá para conocer si aquélla es la purgación del alma, y, si lo es, si es del sentido o del espíritu (lo cual es la noche oscura que decimos), y cómo se podrá conocer si es melancolía o otra imperfección acerca del sentido o del espíritu" (*Ascent*, prologue.6).

road they are walking along, and the one they ought to follow if they want to reach the summit of this mount."[28] What the *Ascent* will map is a way to find the right path, not the path of transformation itself.

John remarks in *The Living Flame of Love* that the useful roles of the spiritual director are to comfort the soul, to recognize when the Holy Spirit is at work in the individual, and to get out of the way at the right time. He insists, as always, "God is the principal agent in this matter."[29] Directors who require those they guide to do the same things in prayer that they have done (or worse, who insist that they do what directors, based on the theology they have studied, conceptualize should be done) work against God's initiative in the soul.[30] A guide lacking interior experience can be most detrimental. One who "knows no more than to hammer and pound with the faculties like a blacksmith" mars the work of the Holy Spirit.[31] The spiritual guide's inner life should be used in self-discipline and in attending to how the Spirit may be at work in the seeker. The writer or confessor's principal task is to remove hindrance from the contemplative's way.

On so many occasions, John wrote about what would divert, intrude between, or diminish the relation between the contemplative and God. A religious painting found in a church was only useful to the spirit if attention and desire moved beyond it. Its aesthetic excellence could be a decoy:[32]

> People who are truly devout direct their devotion mainly to the invisible object represented, have little need of many images, and use those that are conformed more to divine traits than to human ones. They bring these images—and themselves through them—into conformity with the fashion and condition of the other world, not with this one. They do this so worldly images will not stir their appetite and so they will not even be reminded of the world, as they would in having before their eyes

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[28] "De todo, con el favor divino, procuraremos decir algo, para que cada alma que esto leyere, en alguna manera, eche de ver el camino que lleva y el que le conviene llevar, si pretende llegar a la cumbre deste Monte" (*Ascent*, prologue.7). This may echo John Cassian, whose 5th-century *Conferences* were, and are, widely read in monastic life. Cassian calls the process of purification of heart offered to God "travel on a marked road…without which it is impossible for anyone to reach our target" of eternal life (*Conferences*, 1.4).

[29] "Es Dios el principal agente y el mozo del ciego" (*Flame*, 3.29); see also 3.36 and 3.44.

[30] *Flame*, 3.37.

[31] "No sabe sino martillar y macear con las potencias como herrero" (*Flame*, 3.43). See also *Ascent*, prologue.4.

[32] *Ascent*, 3.35.3.

> any object apparently a part of this world. Their heart is not attached to these goods, and if these are taken away, their grief is slight. They seek the living image of Christ crucified within themselves, and thereby they are pleased rather to have everything taken from them and to be left with nothing.[33]

Sublime preachers could also divert desire and thought into "vain rejoicing" if the contemplative hearing the sermon became enthralled by the preacher's style. Preaching efficaciousness came from the spiritual maturity of the speaker, not from rhetoric. The words that awakened love for God came from God, not from human genius.[34] Even gifts of God could become obstacles, if the person receiving them tarried in amazement at them or clung to them as proof of attainment. The solution, as always, was to allow oneself to be drawn to God by God. John's advice was to thank God for visions and supernatural communications to the senses, but to turn again toward the transformation being worked in the seeker's soul.[35]

His writing was a temporary instrument marginal to transformation. In his prologue to *The Spiritual Canticle*, John insists that he cannot pin down the meaning of the poem he wrote which his treatise purports to discuss. The enigmatic stanzas that so heavily echo the Song of Songs were composed in "a love flowing from mystical understanding." It was that love, not the words which resulted from it on the page, that was both the origin of communication and the guide for the contemplative's understanding of what she read:

> It is better to explain the utterances of love in their broadest sense so that each one may derive profit from them according to the mode and capacity of one's own spirit, rather than narrow them down to a meaning unadaptable to every palate. As a result, though we give some explanation of these stanzas, there is no reason to be bound to this explanation. For mystical wisdom which comes through love and is the subject of

[33] "La persona devota de veras en lo invisible principalmente pone su devoción y pocas imágenes ha menester y de pocas usa y de aquellas que más se conforman con lo divino que con lo humano, conformándoselas a ellas y a sí en ellas con el traje del otro siglo y condición y no con éste, porque no solamente no le mueva el apetito la figura de este siglo, pero aun que no se acuerde por ella de él, teniendo delante los ojos cosa que a él se parezca. Ni en esas de que usa tiene asido el corazón, porque, si se las quitan, se pena muy poco, porque la viva imagen busca dentro de sí, que es Cristo crucificado, en el cual antes gusta de que todo se lo quiten y que todo le falte" (*Ascent*, 3.35.5).

[34] *Ascent*, 3.45.2.

[35] *Ascent*, 2.17.7–9.

> these stanzas, need not be understood distinctly in order to cause love and affection in the soul, for it is given according to the mode of faith through which we love God without understanding Him.[36]

It was impossible for another person to know what words would do for the contemplative reader already seeking intimacy with God.

Intending not to speak to a general audience, but only to "some of the persons of our holy order of the primitive observance of Mount Carmel, both friars and nuns, whom God favors by putting on the path leading up this mount,"[37] John even handled orthodox doctrine, "through which divine truths are understood," as he advised handling religious paintings, preachers, his poetry, or himself. All had exterior value to the contemplative, but not even doctrine gave sufficient access to infused knowledge of divine life. It was not the resting place for the mind of the religious during contemplative prayer.

John writes in his prologue that the women's community destined to be the first to read *The Spiritual Canticle* will be able to understand the treatise without having studied scholastic theology. The nuns were contemplatives who had "tasted", that is, learned and enjoyed through love the truths toward which John pointed so indirectly in his writing.[38] In the prologue to his last treatise, *The Living Flame of Love*, he tells the widow Ana del Mercado y Peñalosa—for whom he wrote the title poem—that he waited until it seemed that God gave him knowledge, for "certainly through my own ability I shall say nothing worthwhile, especially in matters so sublime and vital."[39] This left Ana reading his words but navigating by her own perceptions in relation with God.

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[36] "Y esto tengo por mejor, porque los dichos de amor es mejor dejarlos en su anchura para que cada uno de ellos se aproveche según su modo y caudal de espíritu, que abreviarlos a un sentido a que no se acomode todo paladar; y así, aunque en alguna manera se declaran, no hay para qué atarse a la declaración, porque la sabiduría mística, la cual es por amor de que las presentes Canciones tratan, no ha menester distintamente entenderse para hacer efecto y afición en el alma, porque es a modo de la fe, en la cual amamos a Dios sin entenderle" (*Spiritual Canticle*, prologue.2).

[37] "Sino con algunas personas de nuestra sagrada Religión de los primitivos del Monte Carmelo, así frailes como monjas…a quien Dios hace merced de meter en la senda deste Monte" (*Ascent*, prologue.9).

[38] *Spiritual Canticle*, prologue.3.

[39] "De mi cosecha nada que haga al caso diré en nada, cuánto más en cosas tan subidas y sustanciales" (*Flame*, prologue.1).

John, the Ambivalent Sign

John wrote to discharge the responsibilities of a spiritual guide toward Christian contemplatives. In other areas of his life, he sometimes chose to be a sign. When he entered monastic life in 1564, he exchanged clothing symbolic of his former life for garments that identified him with the charism of his order. He discarded his patronym, becoming John of Saint Matthew. Four years later, joining Teresa of Ávila's renewal movement, he again changed garments and name. He donned a habit that was shorter, and so less dignified. He also took a new name, John of the Cross. He thus opted to become a more emphatic visible sign of the poverty of Christ.[40]

In themselves, the new name, garment, and practices would not have disturbed members of his order who were not part of Teresa's reform. All were laden with basic Christian meaning. The troubling signal was contrast. When John and two fellow friars shifted from habits made of serge to ones of rough-woven cloth, relinquishing the footwear Carmelites ordinarily wore for sandals or for going completely barefoot, the contrasts symbolically asked the question: what constitutes enough humility in Carmelite life? Under that question lay another one: what constitutes imitation of Christ? The changes brought up questions about insufficiency within the order.

Divergence from any norm passed from the top down in a religious order could produce dangerous fissure in a monastic community. The friar was one of the first men to join the reform and was a visible leader. On his back, the rough cloth of the Discalced habit came to stand for stubborn intent to divide. A 1575 meeting of the international order branded the whole group of Spanish Discalced Carmelites as rebellious.[41] Arrested in 1577, John was questioned by a visitator appointed by the head of the order in Rome. The friar's leadership assignments had been approved. The quarrel lay in whether or not Carmelites in the order at large would accept the authority of the superiors who gave John license to do what he did. He was instructed to

[40] Crisógono de Jesús, *Vida de San Juan de la Cruz* (1930; repr. Madrid, 1982), pp. 83–84. Showing further sensitivity to what they represented, he and the two other friars making their profession in the reform did not declare themselves newly professed, as if they were transferring to another order. They renewed their already existing obedience to their Carmelite provincial and to the prior general of the international order, signaling that they were still Carmelites.

[41] Crisógono, *Vida*, p. 134.

repudiate his work but refused. The visitator declared him "rebellious and contumacious."[42]

John was packed off to monastic prison, where he continued to refuse to reject the reform or to condemn what he had done. The prior there handled him as a friar whose reason had been overcome by passion. He was kept hidden from the rest of the monastic community, lest his rebellion incite division of opinion. On two occasions, the community whipped him, passing the whip from hand to hand. The participants only saw him when he was being humiliated.[43] For a long while, nobody outside the monastery knew where he was. He eventually pried the hinges off the door to the room where he was kept and escaped. He never relinquished his role as a representative of the reform, or of the Carmelite Order.

At the same time John was acquiring another symbolic identity. Those with whom he had had contact as confessor and spiritual advisor began to treat him as a saint.[44] Like the Christian holy man or woman in late antiquity whose mediating power Peter Brown has analysed, John during his lifetime began to be remembered among Carmelites as a man whose relationship with the divine resulted in extraordinary powers. He is still thought of this way inside Roman Catholic tradition. Among present-day readers, the power that has mattered most—and that has drawn most exploratory attention—is the power of John's words to name the impact of divine initiative on the human being, or perhaps to draw the reader toward God. These are the very powers that he insisted he could never personally have.

In his own day, other powers were seen to authorize his use as a saintly sign. Brown remarks that in the traditionally constructed narratives about the early Desert Fathers that shaped the eremitic orientation of John's order, the holy man seems to be a conduit of "effortless, 'gravity-free' flow of divine favours that stem from his person, in the forms of acts of successful arbitration, plainspeaking, cursing and inter-

[42] "Rebelde y contumaz" (cited in Crisógono, *Vida*, p. 152).

[43] Crisógono, *Vida*, pp. 142, 149–50. Whipping was usual treatment of extreme stubbornness in monastic life. See the *Rule of St. Benedict*, 24–28.

[44] He also inspired a wave of popular veneration during the last stages of his illness and death. His habit, the bandages that touched him, and his body were treated like relics (Richard Hardy, *Search for Nothing: The Life of John of the Cross* [New York, 1987], pp. 113–18).

cession, on behalf of individuals or whole communities."[45] In saints' calendars and works produced within the Carmelite Order, such as Crisógono de Jesús Sacramentado's still widely read *Vida de San Juan de la Cruz* (1930), memorial use of John as a sign of purity, humility, and power still occurs. Crisógono de Jesús repeats many miraculous stories collected in depositions given during the inquiry regarding John's beatification. It was said that the friar miraculously healed the broken fingers of a workman, turned the direction of a wildfire away from the monastery in which he was residing, and calmed a storm that threatened to destroy the olive groves and vineyards of the same monastery.[46]

The fame of Christian models of holiness always aligns the saintly person with the portrayal of Christ in the Gospels. John is not the only saint remembered for having power to calm storms or to heal miraculously. Memories of John of the Cross that emphasize his zeal, patience, humility, fidelity to the spirit of the reform, and staunch speaking up for others were drawn into a pattern that included powers over nature deriving from his service to God. In hagiographic memory John came to emblematize Jesus's life on earth. He became a sign of belief that it is possible to resemble Christ.

Dynamism and the Soul

Reading outcome is affected by the stance each reader takes regarding the God John characterizes. John yokes everything to God in his writing. If the deity is not given a place in thought, then John's description of the dynamic nature of the human being has no intellectual traction. Relationship with a beneficially active God is, for John, the origin and final outcome of the human ability to change. On the other hand, an acceptance that the friar, and the contemplatives to whom he wrote, related to such a God returns to John the opportunity to orient readers toward that relationship. It also increases intellectual pressure on them. Readers of the second kind are pressed to think about the outcome for relationship of the interplay among John's statements about the nature of the self; the ebb and flow of his apophatic exhaustions

[45] Peter Brown, "The Christian Holy Man in Late Antiquity," *Authority and the Sacred* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 63–64.

[46] Crisógono, *Vida*, pp. 335 and 375–77.

and burgeoning imagery; his descriptions of ecstasy; and his strong insistence on divine agency.

Western intellectual life has tended to categorize knowledge. John at times writes to categorize, as well. He explains in *The Spiritual Canticle* that in divine union, "even though neither changes its being," the soul and God "both appear to be God".[47] The soul becomes "most like God in purity", although not in essence.[48] Love binds God and the soul together: "So great is this union that even though they differ in substance, in glory and appearance the soul seems to be God and God seems to be the soul."[49] However, to this claim of difference he yokes an insistence that the human being is drawn up into participation in divine life. The soul, which is not God, can live in God so thoroughly that it is no longer activated by personal initiative or by response to the created world. In their fullest development, the seeker's intellect, will, and memory are activated by God.

Even taken as he indicates that they should be taken (as prompts to help the contemplative reader find her own pathway into deepening relation with her Creator), John's portrayals of the human being's inner capacities activated by God's agency contain arresting claims: the intellect after transformation "is God's intellect; its will is God's will; its memory is the eternal memory of God; and its delight is God's delight"; although John reiterates, "the substance of this soul is not the substance of God because it cannot undergo a substantial conversion into Him." The claims of difference in substance immediately follow emphasis on agency. The intellect, which is God's intellect by possession, is now moved and informed by divine light, not by the senses; the seeker's will "is now changed into the life of divine love"; and the memory has in "its mind the eternal years". God's transforming action affects the whole soul: "All of the movements, operations, and inclinations the soul had previously from the principle and strength of

[47] "No mudando alguna de ellas su ser, cada una parece Dios" (*Spiritual Canticle*, 22.4).

[48] "Simílima a Dios en pureza—aunque no esencialmente" (*Ascent*, 2.5.5).

[49] "Porque con tanta fuerza ase a los dos, es a saber, a Dios y al alma, este hilo de amor, que los junta y los transforma y hace uno por amor, de manera que, aunque en sustancia son diferentes, en gloria y parecer el alma parece Dios y Dios el alma" (*Spiritual Canticle*, 31.1).

its natural life are now in this union dead to what they formerly were, changed into divine movements, and alive to God."[50]

Edward Howells recommends that habitual attention be paid to three areas in John's writing: what John says about the difference between the essences of God and human beings; the friar's copious remarks about dynamism; and how he explains the relation between the soul's activity and essence in advanced stages of contemplation.[51] Considering John's descriptions of divine union only in light of his insistence on essential difference between the human being and God can lead to skewed understanding of his theology. John's claims about the soul are yoked ones. As the relationship *between* the human and God becomes intensely reciprocal, the relation of essence and dynamism *within* the soul becomes more active as well: "John's mystical itinerary is primarily described in terms of movement…the movement of transformation is not simply a change between two different states of the soul; it is the imposition of a new movement *in* the soul—the divine dynamism of the Trinity."[52]

Howells particularly dwells on theological implications of John's treatises. Given John's explicit indications that he is writing for Christian contemplatives who are already mature in their religious life, it is also worthwhile to consider that the pairings and yokings John uses in his discussions of transformation may be intended to assist contemplation as a practice. The frequent, sometimes interlocking pairs John discusses may encourage readers to read in ways that mimic shifts in perception.

His lyrics often dramatize perceptual shifts, usually by means of a poetic voice of a soul remembering what happened to it when it

[50] "El entendimiento…se ha trocado en divino…Y la voluntad,…ahora ya se ha trocado en vida de amor divino…Y la memoria…es trocada por medio de esta unión a tener en la mente los años eternos…Todos los movimientos y operaciones e inclinaciones que antes el alma tenía del principio y fuerza de su vida natural, ya en esta unión son trocados en movimientos divinos, muertos a su operación e inclinación y vivos en Dios…el entendimiento de esta alma es entendimiento de Dios, y la voluntad suya es voluntad de Dios, y su memoria memoria eterna de Dios, y su deleite deleite de Dios" (*Flame*, 2.34). See also 1.12.

[51] Edward Howells, *John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila: Mystical Knowledge and Selfhood* (New York, 2002). See particularly chapter 3.

[52] Howells, *John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila*, p. 40.

abandoned itself to its Beloved.[53] His treatises represent perceptual change poetically as well. His use of imagery and dramatization in the treatises is so intensive that he can be questioned on his own grounds: why does he present so many vivid appeals to the imagination, if he is encouraging contemplatives to release attachment to the world, in order to reach toward God?

An answer to this question may be found by considering how the friars and nuns to whom he wrote may have had access to his works. Both women and men received monastic education. As the Carmelite rule instructed, women and men meditated on Scripture privately, read it aloud when they said the Office in the oratory daily, heard it read aloud as they ate, and heard teachings about it in community meetings. Spiritual classics were also available to them if their monastic house possessed a library. These might also be read aloud during meals or read privately. Works of the order were discussed in chapter meetings.[54] The Carmelite Order had a double calling to contemplation and to apostolic work. Discalced men preparing for ordination as priests had undergone formal theological training. Enclosed women, who were the majority of John's directees, had little opportunity to acquire training in the precise attention to details used by Howells and others who probe the theological implications of John's writing.

John's constant inclusion of images and vignettes in his doctrinal works assures that all kinds of readers or hearers will be able to consider the processes of transformation to which he alludes, regardless of their ability to notice the theological implications of what he says about essence and dynamism. The rhythm of Carmelite daily life carefully balanced silence, reading, and listening. John's invitations to the reader or hearer's imagination to "watch" transformation of perception by following unfolding scenes or by shifting attention between images must have been particularly helpful to contemplative listeners.

John stresses the possibility that there are or will be perceptions beyond what seekers presently perceive in relation to God. Images in particular seem to suggest qualities of perception before and after the watersheds past which John encourages the attention to slip. Lavish appeal to the senses of the reader or hearer also counterbalances John's

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[53] Poems not discussed earlier which contain this feature include the gloss "Not for All the Beauty" and "A Romance on the Psalm 'By the Waters of Babylon' ".

[54] See the *Carmelite Rule*, sections 4, 7, 8, and 10.

inexorable insistence in *The Dark Night* and *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, especially, that the contemplative must abandon all that she has. Keith Egan draws attention to the arresting fact that the poem "The Dark Night", which is the occasion for the lengthy discussion of purgation that fills two of John's four treatises, abounds in lovely images. The treatises themselves describe harsh spiritual suffering during the death to the old self. John explains the paradox: he has written the poem as if spoken by a human soul that has already passed through transformation.[55] For the reader or hearer who has not crossed that threshold, John suggests through poetic appeal that her current ability to see will be replaced with an exquisite new one if she allows God to work in her.

A few more examples will be given to suggest the density with which John uses poetic registers in his doctrinal writing. John sometimes proposes two contrasting images in his treatises to represent the same thing or wavers back and forth between two images, never resolving toward one or the other, as for example when he describes the process of purification as darkness but also as illumination. The reader is asked to visualize both dark and light during a discussion about transformed perception: "When the divine light of contemplation strikes a soul not yet entirely illumined, it causes spiritual darkness; for it not only surpasses the act of natural understanding, but it also deprives the soul of this act and darkens it. This is why Saint Dionysius and the other mystical theologians call this infused contemplation a 'ray of darkness'—that is, for the soul not yet illumined and purged."[56]

To take another example, during the time in which it is finishing the work of detaching the seeker from her past ways of living, the Holy Spirit's presence is experienced as spiritually painful. Once free of impediments, the seeker experiences the same Spirit as delightful and enlivening.[57] John's audiences repeatedly encounter images that suggest characteristics of perception on both sides of watersheds. The friar suggests perceptual shift by alternating between images. These include images of dark versus light, a soot-covered window being cleaned, and

[55] Egan, "Dark Night," p. 247.

[56] "De donde cuando esta divina luz de contemplación embiste en el alma que aún no está ilustrada totalmente, le hace tinieblas espirituales, porque no sólo la excede, pero también la priva y oscurece el acto de su inteligencia natural. Que por esta causa san Dionisio y otros místicos teólogos, llaman a esta contemplación infusa *rayo de tiniebla*—conviene a saber, para el alma no ilustrada y purgada" (*Dark Night*, 2.5.3).

[57] *Flame*, 1.19–28.

an ability transformed into a receptivity. The display for the reader's mind is not *kataphasis* as that process is often defined.[58] John is not attempting to allude to God with these pairs of images. Instead, the paired images that suggest pairs of conditions (sooty, clean) or qualities of perceptions (dark, light) are used to propose ways of seeing during John's discussion of a perceptual shift. He seems to be proposing something like the crossing over from one form of knowing to another, such as the soul in the "Stanzas" proclaims occurred to her when she declares that after she abandoned herself, she saw the insufficiency of her old knowledge, while her new knowing soared.

In light of traditional understanding that monasticism is a life dedicated to yearning for God, and in light of John's campaign to encourage Carmelite contemplatives to release themselves into God's hands, a fourth area of the friar's treatises may well be worth habitual attention. The ways in which John's writing suggests release toward God that occurs not as a textual gesture, but as an activity beyond text, seem worthy of consideration. Egan remarks that "the neglect of beauty in the writings of John of the Cross and in spirituality in general has deprived the religious quest of a most compelling element in both arenas."[59] Through more purely literary registers in his writing, John seems to be asking his readers to join him in shadowing—or, perhaps, keeping some kind of rhythmic time with—the shifts from one angle of perception to another that he says occur as a seeker abandons himself to the shaping of the Holy Spirit.[60]

John's Referentiality

Robert Neville says that religious symbols, including religious objects, myths, rituals, stories, poetry, and icons, "have a primary reference directly or indirectly…to boundary conditions contrasting the finite

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[58] *Kataphasis* usually accumulates affirmations of the qualities of God, or about a feature of divine life (Michael Sells, *Mystical Languages of Unsaying* [Chicago, 1994], pp. 35 and 212).

[59] Egan, "Dark Night," p. 242.

[60] His invitations to transfer attention from one image to another supported the daily discipline of attention that John taught Carmelite directees, which he called lifting to God "first movements" (the perceptions that come into consciousness before a decision is taken to act). For a discussion of "first movements", see Kevin Culligan, "From Imprisonment to Transformation," in *Carmel and Contemplation*, pp. 219–23.

and infinite."[61] It appears that John wanted his writing and whatever use his contemplative directees could make of him to serve as the kind of symbol which Neville describes, with one qualification. Neville remarks that religious symbols cannot refer directly to God, to the Tao, to the One, or even to the sacred dimension of life on earth. These are without scope and are understood by religious people to be beyond ordinary life. Any symbol used in a religious community has too much this-worldliness to it to be able to refer directly to the infinite. Instead, Neville argues that since their observable features are the stuff of human lives, religious symbols (to those who handle them as religious symbols) can only "refer directly or indirectly to borderline or worldmaking things, to things having to do with the very worldiness of the world, thus referring always jointly to the finite border and to the infinite within which the border is constituted."[62]

Neville's understanding that religious symbols refer to the borderline between the finite and the infinite recalls John's gesture in his prologue to his treatise *The Spiritual Canticle*. It also recalls the passage with which he brought his treatise on divine union, *The Living Flame of Love*, to a close. In his prologue he insisted that he was unable, and unwilling, to fix his reader's attention on one explanation for the poem that gave his treatise its title. The Holy Spirit would conduct his readers' response on the journey past the temporary signpost of his words on the page. If John is to be taken at his word, many of his writing strategies are—in one way or another—"relayings" beyond himself, which is what Neville says a religious symbol does. However, in the passages under discussion, John did not relay toward the finite limits of himself or of the words he put on paper. It was God, John insisted, who constituted, maintained, and mediated the dynamic watersheds between the finite and the infinite in the seeker's perception. John relayed toward God the boundary-crosser.

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[61] Robert Cummings Neville, *The Truth of Broken Symbols* (Albany, 1996), p. 47.

[62] Neville, *Truth*, p. 11. Drawing on Charles Pierce, Neville argues that most religious symbols function in plural ways: they may mimic what they represent; they may point toward their objects of reference; or they may express traditional meaning about their object (Neville, *Truth*, p. 37).

Words and God

The friar's encouragement to his readers to approach his writing in certain ways differs from some approaches to mystical texts being used today. Those who study consciousness of the presence of God have generally accepted that the inner life of writers cannot be studied directly. It has been acknowledged that what can be studied are texts that relate to experience in complex ways. The historian Michel de Certeau perhaps has taken the implications of this to the limit. The 16th- and 17th-century mystics whose writings he examined seemed to him to have had no God beyond the text. From what they wrote, it seemed that the group's pre- or post-textual experience was one of absence. Certeau trained his attention on what he could explore, which was what the mystics had written, placed in historical context. Lacking God, practitioners of inner life seemed to have created within their texts a discursive world which wishes that God were there. The detectable agents involved in mystical writing were the self-creating mystical writer, the text, and any reader of it, the interplay among these demonstrating the mournful absence of deity.[63]

A large group of scholars, including Louis Dupré, Bernard McGinn, Denys Turner, Mark McIntosh, Rowan Williams, Edward Howells, and Michael Sells, concur with Michel de Certeau in placing great attention on what is accomplished within mystical texts.[64] Recent studies have explored alternative interpretations to those advanced by Certeau. Some trace how the theological working-out within the text may encourage mental events in the reader. For example, Sells has shown convincingly that the writings of masters of apophatic discourse such as the Muslim Ibn Arabi and Meister Eckhart break down "conventional logical and semantic structures," inviting a "meaning event" in the mind of the reader engaged with the text which "does

[63] Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable*, vol. 1 (1982), trans. Michael Smith (Chicago, 1992), pp. 1–26.

[64] See, for example, Louis Dupré, "General Introduction," *Light from Light: An Anthology of Christian Mysticism* (New York, 1988), pp. 3–6; Bernard McGinn, "General Introduction," *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism*, vol. 1 (New York, 1991), pp. xi–xx, as well as his magisterial discussions of textual tradition in four volumes; Denys Turner, *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge, 1995); Mark McIntosh, *Mystical Theology: The Integrity of Spirituality and Theology* (Malden, Massachusetts and Oxford, 1998); and the collection *Silence and the Word: Negative Theology and Incarnation*, ed. Oliver Davies and Denys Turner (Cambridge, 2002), as well as the books by Howell and Sells already cited.

not describe or refer to mystical union but effects a semantic union that re-creates or imitates the mystical union."[65] Ibn Arabi's shimmering textual interplay among discursive worlds leads his reader "from passage to passage, from one question to another" until the text, in itself, semantically reenacts the merging of an independent self with "a divine other".[66]

In contrast with what these insightful studies have found unfolding within the field of the text or potentially occurring in the interplay between the unfolding text and the reader's mind, John insisted to his Carmelite contemplative audience that the discursive world of the text could not represent encounter with the God they sought. Neither was it what would catalyze that encounter. His readers who were mature in Christian life needed to abandon the matter of searching for meaning in text as they responded to divine agency, just as they abandoned all other attachments. For those seeking intimacy with God, everything created—including words on a page—could, as John famously wrote in "The Spiritual Canticle", only stammer if presumed to represent either the way to God or God. He urged his readers to abandon themselves directly into the hands of the Holy Spirit.

Contrasts between the campaign John pursued to encourage readers to allow themselves to be caught up in the Holy Spirit and modern scholarly handling of mystical writing as a field within which meaning-making is found may come down to differences between what John might call proceeding by the intellect and proceeding by love. The friar wrote to Carmelite contemplatives about reciprocal love, a matter on which writers in their order had begun to dwell in previous centuries.[67] He said that as relationship with God deepened, the contemplative became moved by the same Holy Spirit Whom Father and Son communicated to each other. Rowan Williams shows that John explored the love "without any satisfaction or closure" of the Son for the Father's loving throughout his various writings. In John's Trinitarian understanding, the Son's love receives, gives, and pours out "the Father's complete bestowal of love", which since it is an outpouring from origin, exceeds and never ends.[68]

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[65] Sells, *Mystical Languages*, pp. 8–9.

[66] Sells, *Mystical Languages*, p. 88.

[67] Jane Ackerman, "The Carmelite Ancestry of Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross," *Carmelus* 46 (1999): 7–31.

[68] Rowan Williams, "The Deflections of Desire: Negative Theology in Trinitarian Disclosure," *Silence and the Word*, pp. 121–22.

John teaches that the Holy Spirit is the guide and the purifier of the contemplative. Eventually the soul loves by means of the Holy Spirit, as the Son loves the Father in the Trinity. The soul of the contemplative drawn into divine life "loves God, not through itself but through him. This is a remarkable quality, for the soul loves through the Holy Spirit, as the Father and the Son love each other."[69] John insisted that the nuns at Beas already had access—through the participative knowledge that comes from loving relation—to the truths toward which formal theology points. His writing was an encouragement to them, not a substitute for the loving knowledge they found in relationship with God.

John's commentary on the Trinity attends to all three Persons, yet it is time and again the Holy Spirit Who has a hand in leading, purifying, and finally animating the soul in the dynamic state of being which John calls mystical union. In the end, the Holy Spirit completes the portrait of Christ painted in the soul of the contemplative.[70] Leonid Ouspensky explains that Christ is the iconic Being at the center of the viewing experience for an Orthodox Christian who is responding to an icon in a traditional way.[71] Ouspensky says that icons possess the ability to work as signs because of the *kenosis* of Christ described in Philippians 2:6–8. Eastern and Western monastic life dwelt deeply on the implications of 1 John 4:19: "We love, because he first loved

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[69] "Ama…a Dios no por sí, sino por El mismo; lo cual es admirable primor, porque ama por el Espíritu Santo, como el Padre y el Hijo se aman" (*Flame*, 3.82). See also 3.79–81. John concurs with Thomas Aquinas, whom he studied at the University of Salamanca, in this understanding of the Holy Spirit (see for instance, Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologica*, 1.37, titled "Whether the Father and the Son love each other by the Holy Ghost?", which reads in 1.37.2: "He loves Himself and every creature by the Holy Ghost, inasmuch as the Holy Ghost proceeds as the love of the primal goodness whereby the Father loves Himself and every creature").

[70] *Ascent*, 3.35.5. The portrait of Christlike relation with the Father expressed in humility, courage, faith, hope, self-offering, and love is painted in the soul through a transformation that John outlines across the course of his four treatises. In *Spiritual Canticle* 12.6–9, John discusses the "truths sketched deep within" the soul ("en sus entrañas dibujados") which produce in it the likeness to its Beloved, Christ. In the *Flame*, John says that Christ is awakened in the perfect soul (4.16). The friar's discussion of the ability of the purified faculties of the soul to receive knowledge of God's attributes and reflect them suggests how the likeness of Christ is imprinted on the soul (*Flame*, 3.1–23).

[71] Williams also finds resemblances between the structure of John's Trinitarian theology and the interplay among figures and the viewer in Andrei Rublev's icon whose subject is the meal shared by Abraham and his two angelic visitors, and whose central figure Orthodox commentators often take to be Christ (Williams, "Deflections of Desire," pp. 128–29).

us." The emptying of an inaccessible, indescribable God into human flesh, in Christian experience, not only brings God comfortably near, but also enables the human being to respond to God reciprocally. The human response to God's self-expression in the incarnation, mission, death and resurrection of Christ entails "acceptance of the divine economy".[72]

John took his place as a writer in this economy, which he believed animated and preserved the cosmos. He spoke to his contemplative readers from within it, as well. He taught about its participations and reciprocities. Influenced by canonical Christian spiritual writers and theologians; by Scripture, which he is reported to have read avidly in every spare minute he had and which insists on interaction between God and human beings; by daily life in a religious order whose charism emphasized loving union with Christ; by what he learned from conversation with those around him whose contemplative prayer he fostered; and by what he knew of God in his own life, John understood the *cross* which he took as a name to be kenotic. He encouraged his readers to find out directly whether or not it was true that *kenosis* became participation in God.

[72] Leonid Ouspensky, *Theology of the Icon*, vol. 1 (Crestwood, New York, 1992), p. 152.

TERESA OF JESUS AND ISLAM: THE SIMILE OF THE SEVEN CONCENTRIC CASTLES OF THE SOUL

Luce López-Baralt

Saint Teresa of Jesus, one of the most illustrious contemplatives of the Spanish Renaissance, faces an overwhelming aphasia when confronted with the painful task of having to communicate, somehow, her ecstatic trance. But she is in obedience, and she knows that she must instruct her nuns about the interior path they have to follow in order to attain union with that Love which, for Dante, moved "the sun and the other stars".[1] She knows well that her task is not only difficult, but—in itself—impossible: in these intimate operations of the soul, one accedes to the secret "language of God"; and with this "language of God" (as her spiritual master, Saint John of the Cross, had said), it is necessary "to understand it for oneself, and enjoy it and feel it, and for the one who has it to keep silent".[2] But it was important for the nuns whom the Mother Reformer directed with so much vigilance to accede in some way to the highest mastery of their spiritual director. Saint Teresa asks God for inspiration, and feels that she finds it:

> Today [I was] begging our Lord to speak for me—because I found neither thing to say nor how to begin to comply with this obedience [to write the book of the *Interior Castle*] with some foundation, which is to consider our soul like a castle, all of diamond or very clear crystal, where there are many rooms, just as in heaven there are many dwellings.[3]

Saint Teresa's inspiration finds expression in a simile of strange beauty and imaginative complexity. The soul shows itself to her in the form

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[1] "l'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle" (Dante Alighieri, *Comedia: Paraíso*, bilingual edition, trans. and ed. Ángel Crespo [Barcelona, 2004], p. 398).

[2] "[E]ntenderlo para sí, y gozarlo y sentirlo, y callarlo el que lo tiene" (Saint John of the Cross, *Llama de amor viva* 2.21, in Luce López-Baralt and Eulogio Pacho, eds, *San Juan de la Cruz: obra completa* [Madrid, 1991], 2: 284).

[3] "Estando hoy suplicando a nuestro Señor hablase por mí—porque yo no atinava cosa que decir ni cómo comenzar a cumplir con esta obediencia [escribir el libro del *Castillo interior*] con algún fundamento, que es considerar a nuestra alma como un castillo todo de diamante o muy claro cristal, adonde hay muchos aposentos, ansí como en el cielo hay muchas moradas" (Saint Teresa of Ávila, *Moradas del castillo interior* 1, in *Obras completas* [Madrid, 1970], p. 365).

of seven castles or concentric globes made of fine crystal or diamond; the saint perceives that her interior soul is made of the uncreated light in which all authentic mystics feel themselves to be in some way immersed. In the last resplendent castle is God, with whom the soul unites, leaving behind the demon who—in the form of different poisonous animals—wants to penetrate the castles which mark the progressive dwellings of the mystical path. The symbolic scheme would appear to be original, due to an important additional consideration: it has been impossible to document, in all its details and constitutive elements, in European mysticism preceding the Reformer. And the saint, who usually had such a hard time remembering her sources, does not help us with the project of tracing the possible origins of her luminous symbol.

Today we approach mystical symbols inspired with more modern theoretical tools. Even if the visions which gave rise to the saint's writings were authentic, Barbara Kurtz warns that "the language of the mystics cannot transcribe an experience without interpreting it and mediating it, no matter how much the mystic fights against the limits of human language, incapable of approaching transcendence".[4] It is impossible to express a pure experience in literary form without some kind of verbal mediation. The mystical experience takes shape, then, from elements related to the cultural coordinates which the mystic brings to the experience, and which undeniably even influence the form of the experience itself. Mystics use—indeed, cannot help but use (and now I cite Stephen Katz)—"the available symbols of their cultural and religious surroundings".[5] If we accept Katz's suggestion (and his words are, in all lights, persuasive), Saint Teresa of Jesus presents us with a historical-literary problem of the first magnitude: her strange concentric castles would not appear to be the descendants of Western Christian tradition. It is precisely to contribute to the elucidation of this ancient literary enigma that I direct the present pages.

The Teresian symbol of the interior soul's dwellings has given rise, in effect, to one of the most interesting philological problems of Spanish literature. The simile of these seven-times concentric castles, as I

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[4] Barbara Kurtz, "The Small Castle of the Soul: Mysticism and Metaphor in the European Middle Ages," *Studia mystica* 15 (1992): 28–35, at p. 32. The translations from Arabic are mine in all cases.

[5] Stephen Katz, "Language, Epistemology, and Mysticism," in *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis*, ed. Stephen Katz (Oxford, 1978), p. 24.

have said, does not form a part of the European cultural legacy; and because of this, scholars have devoted themselves feverishly to the search for literary sources of these elusive fortresses of the soul. To make an inventory of source studies—as long as it is deceptive—is a job I have already done elsewhere;[6] therefore I shall limit myself here to recalling only the most representative cases.

The findings of scholars such as Morel Fatio, Gaston Etchegoyen, Menéndez Pidal and R. Hoornaert attenuate, to some degree, our surprise at this simile because they document the equivalence of the soul with a castle in authors writing before the saint. It seems fair, nonetheless, to point out that Carl Jung and Mircea Eliade also highlight the universality of this image. In his studies of alchemy, Jung reproduces an engraving of a fortified castle with 16 towers and an interior moat. This scheme coincides with the Oriental mandalas which describe the Tao or the search for deep consciousness, but it was drawn by none other than one of his patients.[7] I myself a few years ago walked around Borobudur's temple in Java, a large tower surrounded by a spiral staircase which led slowly to its symbolic interior. The fortifications, which it is necessary to pass over in stages, are evidently a commonplace simile for describing access to the soul's interiority.

But these antecedents—the archetypal castle drawn by Jung's patient, the Oriental edifices built in the manner of stone mandalas, and the literary texts hunted down by illustrious European critics, which I shall go on to examine in the pages that follow—end up being of little use for our project of tracing Teresian sources: in none of them do we find the soul's mystical advance clearly structured according to seven dwellings (or castles), successively more interior. Gaston Etchegoyen, one of the critics who has studied most in depth the philogenetic problem of the castles in his *L'amour divin: essai sur les sources de Sainte-Thérèse* (1923),[8] proposes as Teresa's principal sources Bernardino de Laredo and Francisco de Osuna. Both authors, so often read by the

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[6] Cf. above all Luce López-Baralt, "El símbolo de los siete castillos concéntricos del alma en Santa Teresa y en el Islam," in *Huellas del Islam en la literatura española: de Juan Ruiz a Juan Goytisolo* (Madrid, 1985–89), pp. 73–97. The English version of the book was published by Brill in Leiden in 1992 under the title *Islam in Spanish Scholarship: From the Middle Ages to the Present*. A preliminary version of this essay, which I have updated for the current volume, appears on pp. 91–142.

[7] *Psicología y alquimia*, trans. A. L. Bixio (Buenos Aires, 1957); see also C. G. Jung, *Obras completas*, 4 vols (Madrid, 1999–2001).

[8] Gaston Etchegoyen, *L'amour divin: essai sur les sources de Sainte-Thérèse* (1923).

saint, conceive of the interior soul like a castle; but their outlines are not sufficient to explain to us the details of the Reformer's symbol. Osuna limits himself to an outline too tied to medieval allegories, in which the traditional enemies (the flesh, the world and the devil) try to penetrate the soul's castle. Osuna says:

> the heart should be guarded with all diligence, as is guarded a castle which is surrounded, placing against the three attackers three lamps: against the flesh, which surrounds us with delights, place chastity; against the world, which surrounds us with riches, place generosity and alms; against the devil, which pursues us with rancor and envy, place charity.[9]

Laredo's simile is more intriguing and complex, but fundamentally more distant than Teresa's: the understanding is like a *civitas sancta* seated in a quadratic field, with a foundation of crystal and walls of precious stones, with a Paschal candle in the center which symbolizes Christ. For Bernard of Clairvaux the soul's castle is founded on the allusion, undoubtedly more utilitarian and prosaic, of the castle of Clairvaux's order. Robert Grosseteste, for his part, opts to equate his interior castle with the Virgin Mary's womb receiving Christ. He does this in his *Château d'amour*, an Anglo-French treatise written in the 13th century. He is echoed by Master Eckhart, who reinforces the equivalence by making use of a passage from Luke's gospel (10:38): *Intravit Jesus in quodam castellum*. It certainly did not occur to Saint Teresa to utilize this useful biblical reinforcement; her image undoubtedly went in other directions.

The Portuguese were obsessed with the simile of the spiritual castle, although they developed it with the same limitations as their European correligionists. For Saint Anthony of Lisbon (or Padua) the *castellum* whose towers and walls he describes so carefully in his *Sermones et evangelia dominicarum* symbolizes the Virgen Mary; his compatriot Fra Paio de Coimbra concurs. More interesting perhaps is Dom Duarte, who in his *Leal conselheiro* speaks to us of the "five houses of our heart", progressively more interior. The most inner room is the

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[9] "[Q]ue se guarde el corazón con toda diligencia, como se guarda el castillo que está cercado, poniendo contra los tres cercadores tres lámparas: contra la carne, que nos cerca con deleites, poned la castidad; contra el mundo, que nos rodea con riquezas, poned la liberalidad y limosna; contra el demonio, que nos persigue con rencores y envidia, poned la caridad" (Francisco de Osuna, *Tercer abecedario espiritual* [Madrid, 1971], p. 198).

"oratory", and Mario Martins is right when he sees a certain familial relationship between this Portuguese writer and Saint Teresa: "they pertain to the same tribe, although of more humble family".[10]

Faced with the difficulty of finding the seed of this simile, Ramón Menéndez Pidal proposes as antecedent the romances of chivalry—those best-sellers of the Spanish Renaissance—which the saint read with such juvenile passion. But when we examine closely the enchanted castles of Amadís, of the *Baladro del sabio Merlín*, of the *Peregrinación de la vida del hombre* (by Pedro Hernández de Villalumbrales), among so many other similar books, we find ourselves forced to conclude that they do not deliver to us the key to the symbol of the imaginative nun of Ávila. In them we see resplendent palaces of gold or silver, embellished with jewels; but they are never seven-times concentric, nor do they celebrate theopathic union in their interior recess.

In what would almost appear to be an act of critical desperation, on the other hand, some scholars have opted for an extra-literary solution to explain the sudden inspiration of the Reformer. Miguel de Unamuno proposed around 1909 that the walled city of Ávila was the one which served as a model for *Las moradas*, and Robert Ricard, in 1965, chose to give credence to Unamuno.[11] In 1970, Trueman Dicken proposed as a philogenetic solution not Ávila, but the Mota castle in Medina del Campo, which he hastened to compare minutely (and, it appears to me, without much success) with the castle of the seven dwellings of Saint Teresa's mysterious simile.[12] None of these structures (as is obvious to all, since we can still visit them) consists of seven castles, progressively more interior.

E. Allison Peers summarizes the overall disappointment of Western scholars faced with the impossibility of finding precedents for Teresa's symbolic scheme in Christian spirituality with these solemn words: "there never was a writer whose sources it was less profitable to study".[13]

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[10] "[P]ertenecen a la misma tribu, aunque de familia más humilde" (Mario Martins, *Alegorias, símbolos e exemplos morais da literatura medieval portuguesa* [Lisbon, 1975], p. 233).

[11] Unamuno appears to have played with the idea many years ago, since he mentions it in a letter to Francisco Giner de los Ríos in 1899. See R. Ricard, "La symbolisme du 'Château intérieur' chez Sainte-Thérèse," *Bulletin hispanique* 67.9 (1965): 27–41.

[12] Trueman Dicken, "The Imagery of the Interior Castle and its Implications," *Ephemerides Carmeliticae* 21 (1970): 198–218.

[13] E. Allison Peers, *Study of the Spanish Mystics* (New York, 1951), 1: 17.

Nor do other attempts to contextualize the simile within a spiritual cosmogony of Aristotelian origin succeed in explaining its principal details. It is evident that Saint Teresa, on speaking to us of her soul in the form of seven circles or concentric castles, alludes obliquely to the seven planetary spheres. In this she coincides, in broad brush strokes, with spiritual writers of diverse religious persuasions who have done the same. The Reformer visualizes her soul as a microcosmic symbol of the celestial macrocosmos: she equates her spiritual dwellings not only with castles but with heavenly spheres. In her treatise *Las moradas* she alludes in passing to the "divine heaven", that is to say, to the celestial counterpart which is her soul or most recondite castle in a state of perfect unity. Saint John of the Cross also alludes, certainly, to these seven dwellings which constitute his concentric soul. In doing this, both mystics echo a venerable cosmological tradition which reached (as is well known) as much to the East as it did to the West.

In his *De caelo*, Aristotle imagines a universe in the form of concentric spheres revolving in circular motion; and this cosmic scheme, as Seyyed Hossein Nasr reminds us, "transformed itself into a symbol which provided the background for the spiritual path of the human being".[14] The neo-Platonic, Hellenic, Pythagorean, Gnostic and hermetic traditions adapt the universal symbolic structure to personal spirituality: in texts so divergent as the Koran (23:17 and 65:12) and the spiritual treatises of Pseudo-Dionysius the Aeropagite, we will see the concentric simile repeated. All these traditions, so dissimilar in themselves, propose that primordial man, whose nature (of divine origin) has remained trapped in a mortal body, should ascend symbolically the concentric orbits of the universe until he attains reunion with the Divinity. The *Miʿrāŷ* (translated in Europe as the prophet Mohammad's *The Book of the Ladder*) is, perhaps, the clearest example of Islamic elaboration of the ancient cosmic leitmotif, while Book 3 of Enoch or the *Book of the Hejalots* represents a Hebrew rewriting of the same venerable tradition.[15] The *Divine Comedy* of Dante (so much in debt, as Miguel Asín demonstrated, to Muslim eschatalogical

[14] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Studies: Essays on Law and Society, the Sciences, and Philosophy and Sufism* (Beirut, 1967), pp. 50–51.

[15] In my cited essay "El símbolo de los siete castillos concéntricos," I refer extensively to the Hebrew tradition of the *Hejalot*, which I contrast with the fortified Islamic and Teresian castles.

legends)[16] is the best literary demonstration of the Christianization of this symbolic spiritual path by way of the spheres. But it is not the only one: Francisco Rico as well as Aurora Egido add an abundant number of Western spiritual writers who reformulate the image of the soul as a "little heaven".[17] Henry Corbin[18] and Michael Sells[19] add another one in the case of Islamic mysticism: numerous Sufis ascend by concentric spheres, symbolic of the soul, in search of the state of *fanāʾ*, or ultimate spiritual union. Let us remember in this sense the seven organs or subtle centers (*laṭīfa*) of Simnānī, the seven interior heavens of Naŷm al-Dīn al-Kubrà, and the seven orifices of God's throne, which constituted the counterpart of man's soul according to the spiritual cosmogony of Ruzbehān of Shiraz. It is precisely to these mystical orbits—micro- and macrocosmic—that a Sufi lesson of great plastic beauty makes allusion: man is a recipient of clay which, nevertheless, contains within itself all the spheres of the universe.

Saint Teresa closes ranks with all these contemplatives, heirs of the ancient Greek cosmogonies, and describes in her *Moradas* a path of spiritual descent toward the ultimate apex of her soul by way of seven stages or successive dwellings which resemble concentric heavens. But she imposes upon herself a *caveat*: the saint visualizes her dwellings or spheres as symbolic castles, and would appear with that to have introduced a most singular variant to the venerable cosmic scheme of planetary orbits which she inherited, in the final analysis, from Aristotle. It would appear, then, that the warning of E. Allison Peers continues to go unheeded: "there never was a writer whose sources it was less profitable to study".

Miguel Asín nonetheless broke the critical impasse when he announced the existence of an anonymous text called the *Nawādir*, a "curious compilation of accounts and religious thoughts […] redacted at the end of the 16th century".[20] Asín succeeded in finding the

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[16] Miguel Asín Palacios, *La escatología musulmana de la "Divina Comedia"* (Madrid, 1961).

[17] Cf. F. Rico, *El pequeño mundo del hombre: varia fortuna de una idea en las letras españolas* (Madrid, 1970); and A. Egido, "La configuración alegórica del *Castillo interior*," *Boletín del Museo e Instituto "Camón Aznar"* 10 (1982): 69–93.

[18] Henry Corbin, *L'homme de lumière dans le soufisme iranien* (Paris, 1961).

[19] Michael Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism* (New York, 1996).

[20] "[C]uriosa compilación de relatos y pensamientos religiosos […] redactada a fines del siglo XVI" (Miguel Asín, "El símil de los siete castillos del alma en la mística islámica y en santa Teresa," *Al-Andalus* 2 [1946]: 267–68). The essay is included in a posthumous book by Miguel Asín which I edited with an introductory study:

schematic, but precise, germ of the Teresian castles and describes his finding in a brilliant essay which saw the light posthumously in 1946: "El símil de los castillos y moradas en santa Teresa y en el Islam" ("The simile of the castles and dwellings in Saint Teresa and Islam"). Although we do not find in the *Nawādir* the exhaustive mystical elaboration which Saint Teresa brings to fruition, nonetheless there are present here the principal elements of the image which the Reformer believed to be the exclusive product of God's inspiration:

> God placed for every son of Adam seven castles, inside of which is Himself and outside of which is Satan barking like a dog. When man allows a breach to be opened in one of them, Satan enters through it. It is to be advised, then, that he guard and keep watch over them with all care, particularly the first castle; for while their foundations remain healthy and while they are still standing, there is no evil to fear. The first of the castles, which is of white pearl, is the mortification of the sensitive soul. Inside it there is a castle of emerald, which is purity and sincerity of intention. Within it there is a castle of brilliant marble, which is obedience to God's commands, positive and negative. Within it there is a castle of stone, which is gratitude for divine benefits and conformity with the divine will. Inside it there is a castle of iron, which is leaving oneself in the hands of God. Inside it there is a castle of silver, which is mystical faith. Inside it there is a castle of gold, which is the contemplation of God—may He be glorified and honored!—. Already God said (may He be praised!) [Koran 16:101]: "Satan has no power over those who believe and put their confidence in God".[21]

But the problem of the Islamic affiliation of Teresa's concentric castle was not completely resolved by Asín, because the documentary evi-

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Miguel Asín Palacios, *Šaḍilíes y alumbrados*, ed. Luce López-Baralt (Madrid, 1990), pp. 349–450.

[21] "Puso Dios para todo hijo de Adán siete castillos, dentro de los cuales está Él y fuera de los cuales está Satanás ladrando como el perro. Cuando el hombre deja que se abra brecha en uno de ellos, entra por él Satanás. Conviene, por tanto, que los vigile y guarde con todo cuidado, particularmente el primer castillo, pues mientras permanezcan incólumes y en pie sus cimientos no hay mal que temer. El primero de los castillos, que es de cándida perla, es la mortificación del alma sensitiva. Dentro de él hay un castillo de esmeralda, que es la pureza y sinceridad de intención. Dentro de él hay un castillo de brillante losa, que es el cumplimiento de los mandamientos de Dios positivos y negativos. Dentro de él hay un castillo de piedra, que es la gratitud a los beneficios divinos y la conformidad con el divino beneplácito. Dentro de él hay un castillo de hierro, que es el dejamiento en las manos de Dios. Dentro de él hay un castillo de plata que es la fe mística. Dentro de él hay un castillo de oro, que es la contemplación de Dios—¡glorificado y honrado sea!—. Ya dijo Dios, ¡ensalzado sea! [Alcorán 16:101]: 'Satanás no tiene poder sobre los que creen y ponen en Dios su confianza' " (Asín Palacios, *Šaḍilíes y alumbrados*, pp. 267–68).

dence he possessed was that of a text from the end of the 16th century—contemporary or posterior, therefore, to the saint of Ávila. Asín believed that the simile would have been perfected in the Islam of that day, since Aḥmad al-Ghazālī (brother of the celebrated philosopher) outlines in his *Kitāb al Taŷrīd* the scheme of the soul in terms of concentric circles. In this the master was wrong, as I would have to discover many years later.

In 1981[22] I announced my good fortune of success in resolving Asín's principal doubts regarding the symbol's origin, since I had obtained documentary evidence of which the master was unaware at the time when he wrote his essay in 1944. This document was found inserted in the *Maqāmāt al-qulūb* or *Stations of the Hearts* of Abū l-Ḥasan al-Nūrī of Baghdad, which I have published in a Spanish version.[23] It then appeared plausible to me, in light of the discovery of Nūrī's work, that we were in the presence of a recurrent symbolic motif in Islamic mysticism. Nūrī repeats, with variants of little importance, the symbolic scheme of the seven concentric castles of the *Nawādir* in the eighth vignette of his treatise. The two examples which Asín and I had been able to document—with so many centuries of difference between the texts, from the 9th century to the 16th century—pointed toward the probability of a recurring tradition in Sufi literature.

Many years after having made the initial announcement of my discovery, it gives me pleasure to point out that we are no longer in speculative territory: I have been able to document the symbol of the seven concentric castles not only in the *Stations* of Nūrī of Baghdad, but also in other, additional Islamic authors. The principal—though not the only—ones are Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmiḏī, who contrived the simile in the 9th century (but before Nūrī in his *Gawr al-umūr* or *Book Concerning the Profundity of Things*); and Muḥammad b. Mūsa al-Damīrī (died 808/1405), author of the extensive *Dictionary of Natural History*, known in Arabic by the title of *Kitāb ḥayāt al-ḥayawān*. Damīrī

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[22] Luce López-Baralt, "Simbología mística musulmana en San Juan de la Cruz y en Santa Teresa de Jesús," *Nueva revista de filología hispánica* 30 (1981): 21–91. I have mentioned this particular finding in other contexts, above all in the preliminary study to my cited edition of Asín Palacios's last book, *Šaḏilies y alumbrados*, pp. ix–lxvii. I returned to the topic again in *The Sufi 'Trobar Clus' and Spanish Mysticism: A Shared Symbolism* (Lahore, Pakistan, 2000).

[23] Abū-l-Ḥasan al-Nūrī, *Moradas de los corazones*, trans. Luce López-Baralt (Madrid, 1999). Miguel Asín had nonetheless broken the critical impasse when he announced the existence of an anonymous text called the *Nawādir*.

repeats the simile in the 14th century; undoubtedly he borrows it from earlier sources. We have, then, documented the Teresian scheme of the seven concentric castles in the 9th century (two cases), in the 14th century, and in the 16th century: we are already, without room for doubt, faced with a recurrent image in Islam, just as Asín and I had suspected from the beginning. Other Sufi spiritual writers allude to it, as we shall have occasion to see, such as Ŷalāluddīn Rūmī in the 13th century and Ṣadr al-Dīn Shirazī (known as Mullā Sadrā) in the 16th.

To the numerous authors who make use of the simile of the interior castles, and whom I have been citing, José Antonio Antón Pacheco[24] adds the case of the Persian Suhrawardī. The celebrated contemplative of the 12th century makes use of the image, in turn, in his *Kitāb hayākil an-nūr* (*The Book of the Temples of Lights*), and considers that each one of his seven *hayākil* ("temples" or "palaces") corresponds to distinct moments of the process of mystical and metaphysical interiorization. Like many other authors, Suhrawardī interiorizes the symbolic journey across the seven planetary orbits, converting the journey *ad extra* into a journey *ad intra*. Although Antón Pacheco thinks—with Louis Massignon and Henri Corbin—that these coincidences of Islamic with Teresian mysticism are not due to influences or literary borrowings, but instead that they are the fruit of "an originary spiritual experience",[25] in my own view I would see no problem with adding the case of Suhrawardī to the long chain of Islamic authors who boast of the seven concentric castles or palaces of the mystical path. This chain of authors is too long and too consistent to be mere coincidence: everything appears to indicate that we are dealing with a commonplace of Sufism.

The poet and Orientalist Clara Janés, for her part, also makes reference to the theme and adds new points of contact between Saint Teresa and the Sufis in her acceptance speech for the tenth Premio Nacional de las Letras Teresa de Ávila (2007).[26] It is not difficult to think that new research will bring to light additional examples of the

[24] José Antonio Antón Pacheco, "El símbolo del castillo interior en Suhrawardī y en Santa Teresa," in *Mujeres de luz: la mística femenina, lo femenino en la mística*, ed. Pablo Beneito (Madrid, 2001), pp. 7–24.

[25] "[U]na experiencia espiritual originaria" (Antón Pacheco, "El símbolo del castillo interior," p. 23).

[26] I am grateful to the author, who provided me with a copy of her lecture. It is still unpublished as I write these pages.

simile of the seven-times concentric interior castle in Islamic literature. The studies which have been done up until now keep confirming the pioneering intuition of Miguel Asín.

Saint Teresa would not appear, then, to have "invented" the beautiful plastic image of the interior castles, no matter how unusual it may have appeared to Western sensibilities: she simply elaborated it in ingenious detail, Christianized it and adapted it for her own ends. The origins of the symbol, as E. Allison Peers feared, are not then so "useless" to study. They are only uncovered with a great deal of effort: obviously, it has been necessary for me to carry out this prolonged study not in the West, but in the East; and that fact speaks for itself. Before passing on to an explanation of the symbol of the concentric castles in Islam and exploring its resonances and variants with Teresa's dwellings, I think it is worth giving an account of the multiple dwellings—more than seven, undoubtedly—which I have had to inhabit in the course of pursuing this concentric symbol of the soul, whose first trace Miguel Asín discovered with such good fortune.

The attempt to clarify the origin of the simile of the castles turned me into an itinerant, *causa sophiae*—in search of wisdom, as those medieval schoolboys (who travelled laboriously in search of codices and masters) used to say. A comparatist, as my friend Claudio Guillén once said, is "a person who bothers his friends frequently". Even more so, a Hispano-Arabist who writes from the *ínsulas extrañas* or "strange isles" of which Saint John of the Cross sang in the 16th century.[27]

My first investigations began in 1971, during my period of study at the American University of Beirut in Lebanon. Everything happened, as is usually the case, fortuitously. Fortune bequeathed me a friendship with a nun who was a native of Malta, Sister Mary Busutil, with whom I shared an interest in spiritual topics. One afternoon she invited me to study with her in the convent where she lived in the Beirut of that time, now lost forever. On the modest shelf of her cell I encountered the book of Paul Nwyia, *Exégèse coranique et langage mystique*, which had just been published recently.[28] Upon flipping through its pages anxiously, I surrendered to the surprise—a sensation I still feel vividly—of discovering that a remote Baghdad visionary of the 9th century named Abū-l-Ḥasan al-Nūrī conceived of his ecstatic heart

[27] "Cántico espiritual," version A, stanza 13.
[28] The book was published in Beirut (1970).

beneath the symbol of seven castles or concentric dwellings (*maqāmāt al-qulūb*), in the deepest interior center of which occurred the miracle of union with God. This discovery was a priceless gift for a reader of Saint Teresa of Jesus. The professor Iḥsān ʿAbbās initiated me then into the theories of Asín Palacios concerning the possible Islamic root of Saint Teresa's simile (I should admit that I was a young beginner at the time and had not yet read Asín's celebrated essay). Upon reading it, I noticed that neither Miguel Asín nor Louis Massignon had been aware of Nūrī, a spiritual writer of the 9th century who belonged to Baghdad's school of the "inebriated mystics". He was a pioneer in the codification of Islamic mysticism, to whom were attributed numerous charisms and a spirituality which bordered on the heroic. His pious teachings, his sharp spiritual perception and, above all, his inner illumination earned him the epithets of Nūrī or "luminous" and "Prince of Hearts". Ŷunayd, in spite of the differences in interpretation of the mystical path which at times separated him from Nūrī in life, mourned the death of his companion with these solemn words: "[h]alf of Sufism just disappeared with him".[29] My first translation from Arabic, as tentative as it was joyous, was precisely of these *Maqāmāt al-qulūb* or *Stations of the Hearts*.

I was on my way. Years later, with the first draft of my translation of the *Maqāmāt al-qulūb* under my arm, I met at Harvard University Kāmil al-Sheibī, the great Iraqi scholar of Nūrī. Supported with a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, I went to Baghdad to study with Sheibī the work of this enigmatic contemplative which had preceded the symbol of the Teresian castles by seven long centuries. At that time Sheibī was preparing his edition of the complete works of Nūrī, based on the unedited manuscripts of his work, which he had succeeded in reuniting over the course of many years. He generously shared with me some of these codices. It will remain forever etched in my memory, that scene of the Tigris bordered with date trees in front of which we worked, the setting for so many miraculous anecdotes attributed to the pious contemplative who was the motive of my studious vigils. Sheibī and I continued our investigations by correspondence until, years later, the trace of my gener-

[29] Cf. A. Schimmel, "Abū'l-Ḥusayn al-Nūrī: 'Qibla of the Lights'", in *Classical Persian Sufism: From its Origins to Rumi*, ed. L. Lewisohn (London, 1993), p. 64.

ous colleague disappeared. It was not until 2007 that I learned of his death, which occurred in a Baghdad already torn apart by war. The Al-Awqaf Library, which housed the unedited codices of Nūrī, went up in flames: perhaps the Sufi mystic had the mysterious misfortune of dying twice in Baghdad, 11 centuries apart. I trust the future will contradict my dark suspicions as a scholar, but to this day I do not know whether my colleague Sheibī succeeded in publishing his edition of the complete works of Nūrī.

The passage of years returned me to Harvard, this time to the Center for Near Eastern Studies, where I finished a first revision of the rough draft of my translation. I did not edit it then because in order to have a more complete picture of Islamic mystical symbology and its possible relation to Saint Teresa's concentric castles, it was imperative for me to obtain an additional text which Paul Nwyia mentioned in passing in a footnote to his already-cited *Exégèse coranique*: the *Gawr al-umūr*, or *Book of the Profundity of Things*, by Al-Ḥakim al-Tirmiḏī (9th century). I knew that the manuscript used by Father Nwyia was catalogued as "Esat Efendi 1312" in the Suleymaniye Cami Library of Istanbul, because the Lebanese researcher had said in his brief note that Tirmiḏī had preceded Nūrī in his conception of the seven concentric castles of the soul. He had done so precisely in that codex. Nwyia even gave the specific folios containing the passage from the *Gawr al-umūr* which interested me so much. I began the investigation immediately, now from Yale University, where I was teaching at the moment. My colleagues in the Near Eastern Department there moved heaven and earth to convince the Suleymaniye Cami Library of Istanbul to send us a copy of the manuscript. But alas, all their efforts were in vain.

It would take me 12 long years to gain access at last to the *Gawr al-umūr*, but sometimes obstacles bear fruit unexpectedly. When at last I had a chance to organize a research trip to Turkey—another *itinerarium causa sophiae*—my Tunisian colleague Abdeljelil Temimi came to my aid and persuaded Doctor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoğlu, director of the Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture in Istanbul, to provide me with a microfilm of the codex which I could pick up in person while I was there.

In Turkey I had the good fortune to coincide with the Arabist Pablo Beneito, with whom I reviewed, during various October afternoons facing the Bosphorus, the final version of my translation of the *Maqāmāt al-qulūb*. My colleague Beneito provided me, furthermore,

with access to the manuscript reading room of the Suleymaniye Cami Library, where I was able to examine the codex in person. The reader will pardon this personal note, since it has to do with an investigation which has taken too many decades: that manuscript room, intimate and welcoming, through the window grating of which one could catch a glimpse of a rose garden, would have delighted Jorge Luis Borges, with whom I share the notion of paradise as one gigantic library.

Upon reviewing the Turkish codex I was able to corroborate that, in effect, Tirmiḏī had preceded the scheme of Teresa's castles which I had been able to document in the work of Nūrī of Baghdad. But still another surprise awaited me. Soon I discovered that Tirmiḏī was not alone in his formulation of the celebrated "Teresian" simile: the scholar Geneviève Gobillot, editor of Tirmiḏī, announced in her *Livre de la profondeur des choses*—once more, in a brief footnote—the existence of the work of another Muslim author who conceived of the soul as seven concentric castles. It was the *Kitāb ḥayāt al-ḥayawān* or *Dictionary of Natural History* of Mūsa al-Damīrī (d. 808/1405). This time, fortunately, the Arabic original was easier to obtain, since Geneviève Gobillot herself, whom I had met in Tunisia, sent it to me from France to Puerto Rico (for which I have always remained grateful).

Once I had translated from Arabic the pertinent passages from Tirmiḏī and Al-Damīrī, I was able to demonstrate that, in effect, the symbol of the seven-times concentric dwellings or castles which had first brought me to the study of Nūrī of Baghdad was—as Miguel Asín Palacios and I had always suspected—an often-reiterated symbol in Islamic spirituality. I was able to confirm this once more in Tehran, on the occasion of an international conference on the Persian mystic Mullā Ṣadrā, celebrated in May of 1999. This meeting of scholars led me to discover, as I shall explain, that the Persians Rūmī and Mullā Ṣadrā also made use of the simile of the seven castles or dwellings of the soul. I also found out, on the other hand, that if the systematic study of this simile has not been done in the West—which we already knew—then neither has it been done in the East.

It would not be an exaggeration to claim that Asín and I had stumbled upon an authentic commonplace (I would even say cliché) of Muslim mystical literature. From a different angle, even my Moroccan colleague Ouakil Sebbana confirms this: in his religion classes in elementary school in Rabat, it was explained to the schoolboys that the soul was constituted symbolically after the manner of seven fortified

citadels or castles that it was necessary to save until arriving at the last one, which signified attainment of the most authentic spiritual life. The symbol of the concentric castles only seems strange when we take it out of its natural context, which is Islamic. That is to say: Saint Teresa rewrites it in Spanish and Christianizes it in her *Moradas*, to the astonishment of Western erudition, which had not sought to explore it outside of the European literary framework.

It is important, thus, for us to follow in Asín's illustrious footsteps by continuing the project laid out in his posthumous essay, in which, for the first time, he located the genesis of Teresa's simile in Sufi spirituality. I will pass now to exploring more closely the ancient Arabic texts which celebrate the soul in the form of seven dwellings or castles, progressively more interior. I already stated that the first author who captured my attention was the 9th-century Abū-l-Ḥasan al-Nūrī of Baghdad; but we cannot trace the origin of the beautiful plastic image to Nūrī because Tirmiḏī precedes him. Perhaps he was not the first either to originate the symbol of the seven concentric castles in Islamic literature.

Nūrī elaborates, in the eighth vignette of his *Moradas*, the motif of the "castles of the believer's heart" by following the same fundamental scheme as the *Nawādir*. He uses the word *ḥiṣn* to refer to the soul's fortified castle, just like the anonymous Muslim author of the 16th century discovered by Asín, and also like Saint Teresa.[30] Satan attacks above all the first castles, built of fragile materials, while the believer who succeeds in taking refuge in the final fortresses by then has nothing to fear. Nūrī and his Sufi correligionists associate the soul's demonic enemy with a dog who barks threateningly, gaining access to the castles, while Saint Teresa imagines spiritual evil appearing in the form of reptiles or insects and poisonous animals. But both images are perfectly equivalent, since the dog is considered an impure animal in Islam and thus may be associated with the little beasts with which the Saint of Ávila metaphorizes spiritual impurities or the devil himself. Let us look at the Baghdad contemplative's version:

[30] The term *ḥiṣn* could not fail to be significant, since in Arabic it alludes to a castle whose center or interior tower becomes unassailable thanks to various structures or protective fences, progressively more interior, which surround it. In this way it is distinguished from the citadel or fortress (*qal'a*), which does not have these concentric protections and which is thus more easily accessible.

The castles of the believer's heart

You must know that God—may He be exalted—has created in the heart of the believer seven[31] castles (*ḥuṣūn*)[32] with fences and walls around. He ordered the believer to remain within these castles, while He permitted Satan to remain outside, from whence he calls and barks like a dog. The first walled castle is made of corundum (*yāqūt*),[33] and it is the mystical knowledge (*maʿrifa*) of God—may He be exalted—; and around it is a

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[31] As with so many other religions, Islam attributes to the number seven the ultimate perfection. Peter Chelkowski explains: "In Islam seven is considered the perfect number. The seven seas and the seven climates are a combination of the numbers three and four. Each climate has its own astral light. These colors are also expressed geometrically. The triangle symbolizes the body, the spirit and the soul. The four remaining colors—red, yellow, green and blue—constitute a square and represent the active qualities of nature, such as heat, cold, dryness and humidity; the four directions; the four seasons of the year; and the cycle of life, from infancy to death" (Peter Chelkowski, *Mirror of the Invisible World: Tales from the Kamseh of Nezami* [New York, 1975], p. 113).

Nwyia argues, for his part, that "the number seven is Koranic. There are seven heavens (2:29), seven doors of access to hell (15:44), seven aleyas [verses of the Koran] (*maṭānī*), seven oceans (31:27), etc." (Nwyia, *Exégèse coranique et langage mystique*, p. 332). The number seven is, in effect, so sacred to Islam that ʿAbd al-Raḥman al-Ḥamadānī dedicates an entire treatise to this number.

Christianity also considers the number seven to be a sacred figure. For Saint Gregory the septenary number implied consummate perfection because it is composed of a first pair and of a first non-pair, and of a pair that can be divided and of the first non-pair that cannot be divided. To this is added that sacred Scripture takes it to be a number of perfection, and that on the seventh day God rested. Saint Augustine calls the figure the number of the law of grace. It is formed by four and three: four symbolizes the earth, formed of four elements; while three, on the other hand, is the paradigm of the Trinity. For the mystics seven represents, then, the union of the terrestrial and the divine, in addition to the mystery of redemption.

The universal consecration received by the number seven is evident. Judaic mysticism did not ignore it either in its tradition of spiritual discourses, if we remember treatises such as the *Seven Hekhalot* or the *Seven Palaces*, which the Israelite visionary passed through symbolically until he reached the throne of God.

[32] I translate *ḥuṣūn* as "castles", understanding the term in its original sense of "fortress" or "fortified citadel". As was to be expected, Nūrī refers in his treatise to a fortified castle, with which he symbolizes the self-defense of the soul against the attacks of the devil.

[33] Our treatise writer constructs a very beautiful plastic image in which the metals would appear to embellish the precious stone of the *yāqūt* (ruby, which is how some translate from the Arabic the gem of corundum). Being crystallized aluminum, the stone—it is important to remember—can have distinct colors, including white or diamond. Ithamar Gruenwald (*Apocalyptic and Merkabah Mysticism* [Leiden, 1980]) and Catherine Swietlicki (*Spanish Christian Cabala: The Works of Luis de León, Santa Teresa de Jesús and San Juan de la Cruz* [Columbia, Missouri, 1986]) remind us that the kabbalistic tradition, for its part, used corundum or transparent sapphire for the construction of its symbolic palaces. We must be encountering a consistent and shared tradition.

> castle[34] of gold, which is faith in God—may He be exalted—; and around it is a castle of silver, which is purity of intention in words and action; and around it is a castle of iron, which is conformity with the divine will; and around it is a castle of bronze, which is the execution of God's prescriptions (*farāʾid*)[35]—may He be exalted—; and around it is a castle of alum, which is the obedience of God's commands, positive and negative; and around it is a castle of baked clay, which is the education of the sensitive soul (*nafs*) in all action.
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> As God's word says—may He be exalted—"Against my servants you will have no power" (Koran 15:42).[36] The believer is, then, in the interior of these castles; and he who is in the castle of corundum, Satan has no way to get to him, as long as he obeys the rules of conduct for the soul. But if he stops obeying them and says "it is not necessary", then Satan obtains from him this castle, which is of baked clay, and covets the next one. When the believer becomes negligent in the obedience of God's commandments, positive and negative, he obtains from Satan the castle of alum, and covets the third. When the faithful one abandons his conformity to the will of God—may He be exalted—, Satan takes from him the castle of copper and envies the fourth; and thus, successively, until the last castle.[37]

Both the anonymous author of the *Nawādir* (discovered by Asín) and Nūrī in his *Stations of the Hearts*, as well as Al-Damīrī in his *Kitāb ḥayāt al-ḥayawān*, construct their castles using materials filled with brilliant color; and in this they seem to differ from the translucent diamond castles of Saint Teresa. The gradation among the luxurious (gold, silver, precious stones) and prosaic materials (alum, baked clay) establishes, nonetheless, an ascendant mystical path (or better, an internalizing one) which is not far from the interior path described by the Reformer in her *Moradas*.

Let us look briefly at the symbolic scheme of Al-Damīrī. The author attributes the spiritual lesson of the concentric circles to "one of

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[34] All the castles are found to be defended by fences and walls that surround them, although we must admit that Nūrī's exposition is a little ambiguous on this passage. I translate it simply as "castle" to make the meaning clearer.

[35] The author refers to the five principal obligations of the believing Muslim.

[36] For this and subsequent references, I cite Juan Vernet's Spanish version of the Koran (Barcelona, 1967).

[37] The Spanish version of Vignette 8 of the *Moradas de los corazones* forms a part of my translation of the entire Arab text (Madrid, 1999). I have utilized the edition of Paul Nwyia, which is based upon four manuscripts in Istanbul, as a base text. Cf. Paul Nwyia, "Textes mystiques inédites d'Abū-l-Ḥasan al-Nūrī (*Maqāmāt al-qulūb*)," *Mélange de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 44 (1968): 119–54, as well as his already-cited *Exégèse coranique et langage mystique.*

the wise (*ʿulamāʾ*) practitioners",[38] not mentioning, lamentably, his true literary source. It is important to remember that we are already in the 14th century: probably the symbolic leitmotif, of evident mnemonic nature, was so well known in Islam that it could easily pass as anonymous.

Al-Damīrī employs, on the other hand, the same term used by Nūrī for his fortified castles (*ḥiṣn*), by means of which, once more, the Muslims coincide with Saint Teresa. (Or, more accurately, she with them: I insist on this point because elsewhere[39] I have made extensive reference to the tradition of the ancient Hebrew *Hekhalot*, by means of which one ascends to God's throne by way of seven successive palaces, not seven fortified castles.) Al-Damīrī's text is the most extensive of all, but I shall limit myself here to the most relevant passages:

> You must know that God created seven castles in the heart of man. The first castle is of gold, which is the knowledge of God. Around it is a castle of silver, which is faith in Him; around it is a castle of iron, which is trust in Him; around it is a castle of stone, which consists of gratitude and conformity to the divine will; around it is a castle of baked clay, which is obedience to God's commands, both negative and positive; and around it is a castle of emerald, which is truth and sincerity toward God; and around it is a castle of brilliant pearls,[40] which consists of the discipline of the sensitive soul in all action. The believer is in the interior of these castles and the demon (*Iblīs*) is outside, barking like a dog. But the believer has nothing to fear, for he is defended inside these fortresses. It is necessary [nonetheless] that the believer not ever abandon the discipline of the soul under any circumstance.
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> […] [B]ut at times Satan succeeds in obtaining some of these castles, and makes the believer return to the state of sin and disbelief […] [B]ut while the castles of faith and trust are healthy, Satan cannot conquer the believer, because as God said: "This one [Satan] lacks power over those who believe and trust in their Lord" (Koran 16:101).[41]

Here we see how Al-Damīrī begins his description of the interior castle, which in the case of Nūrī is made of corundum and, in that of Al-Damīrī, of gold. The anonymous author of the *Nawādir*, for his

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[38] The author distinguishes between the wise contemplative, who generally retreats from the world, and the "practical" wise man, who teaches spiritually in the context of the world.

[39] See López-Baralt, "El símbolo de los siete castillos concéntricos," which forms a part of the book *Huellas del Islam en la literatura española*.

[40] Literally, "moist"; that is to say, recently drawn out of the sea.

[41] Al-Damīrī, *Kitāb ḥayāt al-ḥayawān* (Cairo, 1906), 1: 210–12.

part, inverts the scheme (as we saw) and describes in the first place the exterior castle of pearl, where even the sensitive soul mortifies itself. The spiritual sense of the three treatises is the same: in the first castles even the low spiritual impulses are mortified, and in the last castles is obtained union with God. We are, obviously, in Teresian territory.

It is important to insist, on the other hand, upon the fact that the Saint of Ávila utilizes the term *morada* to describe the successive spaces of the interior path upon which she sets out toward her own soul. Undoubtedly she had in mind the verse of John's gospel (14:2): "In my Father's house there are many mansions", even though she does not cite it directly.[42] Nonetheless, as Asín Palacios has demonstrated in his *Šāḏilíes y alumbrados*, the concept of dwelling or mansion, understood as a permanent station of the soul (as opposed to more ephemeral states like the Islamic *ḥāl*), appears to be derived from the concept—again, Islamic—of *maqām*, which means exactly that: dwelling or permanent station. The technical use of this concept was unknown in medieval European spirituality, but the Sufis employed it centuries before it obtained currency among the Carmelites. The Muslim teachers varied the number of dwellings or *maqāmāt* which constituted their interior path or *safar*, but some of them coincide with Saint Teresa's seven dwellings. That is the case with Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāŷ (d. 378/988), who explored the seven dwellings of his soul in the *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ* or *Book of Splendors*. The tradition was maintained so consistently that Mullā Ṣadrā repeats the scheme in his *Al-Ḥikma al-muta ʿāliya fī l-asfār al-ʿaqliyya al-arbaʿa* (*Transcendent Philosophy Related to the Four Intellectual Journeys of the Soul*), known generally by the name of *Asfār* or *Journeys*. In this work, Mullā Ṣadrā describes his first spiritual journey, in which the sensitive or carnal soul (*nafs*) finally orients itself toward God.[43] This first journey, as Mullā Ṣadrā and one of his erudite commentators, Muḥammad Riḍa al-Iṣfahānī, explain, consists of different *maqāmāt* or permanent stations. Seyyed Hossein Nasr summarizes the mystical lesson of Ṣadr al-Dīn Šīrāzī in relation to the dwelling of the spirit or intellect (*al-'aql*), which in turn opens onto seven more interior dwellings:

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[42] Biblical quotations are from the Douay version (*The Holy Bible, Translated from the Latin Vulgate*, ed. Richard Challoner [New York, 1941]).

[43] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikma al-muta ʿāliya fī l-asfār al-ʿaqliyya al-arbaʿa* (*Transcendent Philosophy Related to the Four Intellectual Journeys of the Soul*), ed. Muḥammad Riḍa al-Muẓaffar (Tehran, 1958), 1: 13.

> […] the interior dwellings are turned into seven: the dwellings of the *nafs*, of the *qalb*, of the *ʿaql*, of the *rūḥ*, of the *sirr*, of the *jafi* and of the *ajfā*. These dwellings receive these names because these conditions become permanent for the initiate. If they were not permanent states, they would not be called dwellings (*maqām*). And these are the dwellings of devotion and of the city of love to which the Gnostic referred, perennially alive among us, the Mawlā or Lord of Rūm [Ŷalāl al-Dīn Rūmī]: "ʿAṭṭār has crossed the seven cities of love; / We have hardly turned the first corner". If the initiate renounces himself in the Divinity, the first journey touches his end and his being is transformed into a true Being.[44]

Once again we have encountered the Teresian scheme of the seven dwellings or *maqāmāt*, progressively more interior. Just like Saint Teresa, Ṣadr al-Dīn Šīrāzī places the beginnings of the spiritual life in his first *maqām*: from this dwelling of the *nafs* or sensitive soul, the initiate progresses toward the *qalb* or heart; and from there to the *ʿaql* or intellect; and from there to the *rūḥ* or spirit; to the *sirr* or secret; to the *jafī* or that which is hidden; until finally he reaches the most recondite spiritual life (*al-ajfā*). Thus the believer, the same as in Saint Teresa's last "dwelling" or *maqām*, "arrives at his true Being": that is to say, he is united with the Divinity. I have cited extensively this passage from the *Asfār* not only for the parallel it offers with the seven Teresian dwellings, but also for the reference it makes to Rūmī's poem. Mullā Ṣadrā identifies without ambiguity his scheme of the path toward God as concentric dwellings, progressively more interior, with the "seven citadels" of love which Farīd al-Dīn ʿAttār had succeeded in crossing on his journey or *safar* toward the Divinity. Let us note that Mullā Ṣadrā takes for granted that his readers, without further explanation, will understand that the seven citadels of ʿAttār constitute the dwellings or spheres of his interior mystical path. We are, by all appearances, faced with a simile which had to be common currency in Islam during many centuries.

These Persian spiritual writers, but above all Rūmī, definitely bring us closer, once again, to the recalcitrant Teresian enigma: the saint compares her seven "dwellings" or *maqāmāt* of the interior soul not only with the celestial spheres but also precisely with fortified castles or walled citadels.[45]

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[44] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī and His Transcendent Theosophy* (Tehran, 1978), p. 58.

[45] As Asín reminds us in his already-cited work *Šadilíes y alumbrados*, there are other variants which the Saint of Ávila shares with the Islamic castles: prayer is the

Ironically, the Reformer would appear to be closer to the Persian ʿAṭṭār than to Pseudo-Dionysius. Muslims would understand without surprise the mystical scheme which has occasioned so many headaches in the West.[46] Some passages of Saint John of the Cross permit us to suspect, on the other hand, that he was not unaware of the simile either. When he assures us in the *Cántico espiritual* that his poetic protagonist will pass "the forts and borders", he could well be indicating to us that the soul travels on its *safar* or mystical journey by way of fortified citadels which mark the distinct boundaries of the dwellings through which it passes. Saint John's journey is undoubtedly, like that of Suhrawardī, *ab intra*. Perhaps for this very reason the Spouse of the "Cántico" asks the distractions proper to the sensitive soul, represented by a confusing proliferation of animals, "not to touch the wall / so that the bride will sleep more surely":[47] the soul which finds itself *intramuros*, within the fortresses, is already safe from the assaults of concupiscence and other passions. Once again, we are near the mystical journey of ʿAṭṭār through walled citadels.

But let us return to the case of the Islamic authors who describe the symbol of the concentric fortresses in greater detail. The colors and symbolic materials of the castles of Nūrī and Al-Damīrī recall the similes of other Muslim authors such as Simnānī and Nīẓāmī, whose *maqāmāt* or dwellings of the soul still retain the colors and attributes of the planetary orbits with which they are associated.

But not all symbolic castles are so colorful in Sufi spirituality. I have been able to document some Islamic castles which appear as radiant and shining as the pure diamond castles of that woman of light who was Saint Teresa of Ávila. Al-Ḥakim al-Tirmiḏī describes in the 9th century precisely these resplendent castles in his *Gawr al-umūr*, which is certainly the most ancient treatise on the castles that I have been able to document in Islamic literature. Al-Tirmiḏī equates his progressively more interior dwellings or *maqāmāt* with *medinas* (*madīna*, pl. *mudūn*), which means, naturally, "fortified citadels" like the castle-fortresses of his Sufi correligionists. They also resemble those of his

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port of entry to the fortified castle of the soul, which is inhabited, in both cases, by the sentries and guardians of the senses and spiritual powers.

[46] For more details about the case of ʿAṭṭār and Mullā Ṣadrā, I refer the reader to my essay "Spanish Mysticism's Debt to Islam: the Spiritual Symbology of St. Teresa of Ávila," in press, both in Persian and in English, in the proceedings of a conference on Mullā Ṣadrā which took place in Tehran in 1999.

[47] Saint John of the Cross, "Cántico espiritual," in López-Baralt and Pacho, eds, *San Juan de la Cruz: obra completa*, 1: 64.

successor Saint Teresa, who clarifies in her *Camino de perfección* that the soul is a "city" that has to be "very well fortified", with which she simply equates both architectonic structures: "this castle or city".[48] Tirmiḏī, like the saint who was a native of the walled city of Ávila, erects resplendent fortresses made of pure light:

> The exterior heart (*fuʿād*) is the first of the *medinas* of light—[in other words], the light has seven *medinas*—. The first *medina* is that of the exterior heart (*fuʿād*); then comes the conscience (*ḍamīr*); then the exterior covering (*gilāf*); then the interior heart (*qalb*); then the interior covering (*šagaf*); then the bottom of the heart (*ḥabba*); and, finally, the quintessence of the heart (*lubāb*). The conscience (*ḍamīr*) is the interior heart (*qalb*) of the exterior heart (*fuʿād*); the exterior covering (*gilāf*) is the interior heart (*qalb*) of the conscience (*ḍamīr*); the interior heart (*qalb*) is the interior heart (*qalb*) of the exterior covering (*gilāf*); the interior covering (*šagaf*) is the interior heart (*qalb*) of the interior heart (*qalb*); and the bottom of the heart (*ḥabba*) is the interior heart (*qalb*) of the interior covering (*šagaf*); and the quintessence of the heart (*lubāb*) is the interior heart (*qalb*) of the bottom of the heart (*ḥabba*), and that is the source of the light. And the totality of this structure is organized like seven *medinas*, one inside the other [i.e. concentric].[49]

Al-Tirmiḏī appears to play here with the endings of the root *q-l-b*, which signifies as much "heart" as "perpetual change" or "inversion", among other meanings, when it inverts every *medina* or "covering" of the heart (*taqallub*) and makes it capable of being a protection (as much exterior as interior) for the deep apex of the soul. Curiously, Saint Teresa was conscious of these "protecting veils" or "shrouds" of the soul, and her castle-dwellings, like those of Tirmiḏī, change precisely into "coverings":

> You do not have to understand these dwellings one behind another like something in a thread; but instead, place your eyes on the center, which is the piece or palace where the king is, and consider it like a palmetto, which to arrive at the part which is good to eat has many coverings.[50]

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[48] "[E]ste castillo o ciudad" (Saint Teresa, *Camino de perfección* 3.2, in *Obras completas*, p. 203).

[49] *Gawr al-umūr*, Ms. Esat Efendi 1312, Suleymaniye Cami Library, Istanbul, Turkey, fol. 121.

[50] "No havéis de entender estas moradas una en pos de otra como cosa en hilado, sino poned los ojos en el centro, que es la pieza o palacio adonde está el rey, y considerad como un palmito, que para llegar a lo que es de comer tiene muchas coberturas" (Saint Teresa, *Moradas del castillo interior* 1.2.8, in *Obras completas*, ed. Efrén de la

A curious image, undoubtedly, in Spanish hands: the castles of the heart suddenly transform themselves into a palmetto with white coverings, progressively more interior. It is nothing strange in Arabic hands, though: one of the senses of the root *q-l-b*, in addition to "heart", "inversion", "fluctuation", and "perpetual change", is precisely "palmetto": *qilb* or *qulb*. Al-Ḥakim al-Tirmiḏī would have known this, without doubt. I admit that I do not know how Teresa of Jesus knew it.[51]

In light of everything I have said, it appears obvious that the Saint of Ávila contracted profound debts to Sufi literature. The Reformer, in all probability, was not conscious of the fact that she was instituting for Christian use a mystical discourse which had been elaborated for centuries in Islamic literature. The fact that Saint Teresa had drunk so deeply at the literary founts of writers she would have considered enemies of the faith does not invalidate either her visions or the divine inspiration she claimed for her mystical experiences. I already pointed to the fact, explored by Stephen Katz, that the cultural context in which the mystic lives colors and even helps to give symbolic form to her transcendent experience, which is by its very nature impossible to articulate in language. The visionary, even when her ecstasy is—as always, by definition—inexpressible, has at hand the similes which constitute common currency in her cultural environment to explain in some manner what has happened to her beyond all space, time, reason, and language. When she succeeds in communicating—albeit obliquely—something of her vision, only then can it be made useful for spiritual instruction of her correligionaries.

In her own case, Saint Teresa confesses with candor that she has had a mysterious mystical experience which she does not know how to express. She asks herself *ex post facto* which image would be most appropriate for communicating her *theopoiesis*. And it is then (and only then) that there presents itself to her imagination the simile of the seven concentric castles of the soul. Except that said simile, as we already know, was not common currency either in Renaissance

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Madre de Dios and Otger Steggink, Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos 212 [Madrid, 1976], p. 415).

[51] Curiously, Saint John of the Cross also knew about the variants of the three-letter root *q-l-b* ("heart"). He compares his deep heart, seven times concentric, with a "pool". Al-Kubrà had done the same when he equated his concentric soul with a pool of living waters—except that the Sufi master was perfectly conscious that the root *q-l-b* included also the variant *qalīb* or "pool".

Europe or in Renaissance Spain![52] If we echo Katz's hypothesis, we would have to assume that Teresa's literary and religious environment was, in good measure (still in the 16th century, even), strongly Islamicized.[53] It is important to take into account, on the other hand, the fact that the conventual environment promotes oral spiritual exchanges in which technical mystical language is employed; perhaps from these was derived the simile (so useful, pedagogically speaking) of the seven concentric castles.

It certainly does not seem too strange that a simile found so extensively throughout Islamic religion could have been introduced into a popular Spanish tradition of the Golden Age by oral means, particularly after eight centuries of constant cultural interchange between Muslims and Christians. It is a simile of great plastic beauty which is additionally very easy to remember. Michael Gerli[54] and María Mercedes Carrión[55] remind us that many spiritual metaphors—especially architectonic ones[56]—became popular in European spirituality precisely because of their attractive mnemonic character. This was the case with some images of Saint Augustine and Saint Ignatius, which because of their schematic nature were easily remembered. We know that exactly the same thing occurred with the Mother Reformer's concentric simile, for she asked her spiritual daughters to bring it time and again to their memory. Perhaps the simile of the castles was transmitted as a mnemonic device during those silent dialogues between Christians and Muslims which our collective historical memory, just like Cervantes, "does not wish to remember",[57] but which had to have taken place on peninsular soil. Did not Raymond Lull, who died a martyr at the hands of the Muslims, not cite with deep admiration his

[52] On the iconographical problems of the concentric castle, see Catherine Swietlicki, "The Problematic Iconography of Teresa of Avila's *Interior Castle*," *Studia mystica* 11.3 (1988): 37–47.

[53] See the important study by María Jesús Rubiera Mata, *La arquitectura en la literatura árabe* (Madrid, 1981).

[54] Michael Gerli, "El *Castillo interior* y el arte de la memoria," *Bulletin hispanique* 86.1–2 (1982): 154–63.

[55] María Mercedes Carrión, *Arquitectura y cuerpo en la figura autorial de Teresa de Jesús* (Barcelona, 1994).

[56] See Kurtz, "The Small Castle of the Soul," p. 33.

[57] The reference is to the famous opening line of Miguel de Cervantes's masterpiece *Don Quijote*, which begins: "En un lugar de la Mancha, de cuyo nombre no quiero acordarme" (Miguel de Cervantes, *El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha*, ed. Luis Andrés Murillo [Madrid, 1987], 1: 69).

literary teachers ("unes gents qui han nom sufíes") in his *Llibre del amic e amat*?[58]

These Sufis preceded not only Lull, but also Saint Teresa of Jesus, by at least seven centuries. It is moving to think that when Al-Ḥakim al-Tirmiḏī and Nūrī instructed their correligionaries using the mandala of the seven castles of the soul, as much in Khorasan as on the banks of the Tigris, the Spanish with which the Reformer would rewrite their concentric simile so brilliantly had at that point barely been born. Castilian culture, having already reached its full splendor by the 16th century, would remain imbued with a mysterious Islamic perfume, which would make the Teresian *Moradas* one of the most complex spiritual discourses of Western spirituality and, undoubtedly, one of the most richly synthetic.

Translated by Hilaire Kallendorf

[58] Raymond Lull, *Llibre d'amic e amat*, in *Blanquerna: obres originals* (Palma de Mallorca, 1914), p. 378.

THE MYSTICISM OF SAINT IGNATIUS LOYOLA

Darcy Donahue

While many mystics are known primarily for their spiritual life and experiences, Ignatius of Loyola's mysticism is often considered secondary to his identity as religious activist and founder of the most famous Catholic religious order. Nevertheless, Loyola's spirituality was the source of his activism, and his religious goals were inspired by "a mysticism of service based on love rather than the mysticism of loving union".[1] The Jesuits, his creation and best known achievement, continue to embody the focus on activism which marked his religious career. Loyola's goal of acting for the greater glory of God is the product of personal and collective experience. On the one hand, it reflects his willed conversion from the life of a soldier and member of the Basque aristocracy to an existence centered on love of God. On the other, it is the product of a particular set of historical and cultural circumstances over which he had no control. It is important to understand the ways in which these two categories of experience (the individual and the collective) interact in Loyola's unique brand of sanctity.

Although there is still some disagreement about the exact year of his birth, many Loyola scholars consider 1491 the most probable.[2] The year is telling, preceding by one the fall of Granada, the expulsion of the Jews and the unification of the Iberian Peninsula by the Catholic Kings, as well as the arrival of Columbus in the "New World". As other cultures were presenting rifts in the universal Church, Spain was pursuing both national and religious unity through the elimination of nonbelievers, heretics and other potentially subversive elements of the

[1] W. W. Meissner, *Ignatius of Loyola: The Psychology of a Saint* (New Haven, 1992), p. 283. Hereafter cited as Meissner.

[2] Although Loyola himself made 1493 the probable year of his birth, when this was proposed to his old nurse at the time of his death in 1556, she indicated that he was in fact two years older. His first biographer Pedro Ribadeneira uses the date 1491 in his 1572 work; and according to Meissner (p. 426, n. 4), legal deeds drawn up in 1505 by the official notary of Azpeitia point to 1491.

population. Indeed, the "one true faith" became synonymous with the new Spanish state, enforced by its monarchs. However, the church in Spain (as elsewhere) was beset by its own defects and schisms. On the verge of becoming the dominant power in European politics, Spain experienced powerful movements of religious renewal and reform, both orthodox and heterodox. Despite the repressive presence of the Inquisition, which enacted policies of religious and racial purity, the early 16th century was a time of possibility for change. The medieval mentality of scholasticism, while still alive and influential, was countered by the intellectual and spiritual currents of humanism. Theologians and leaders of the church like Cardinal Ximénez de Cisneros opened the door for spiritual transformation and reform, including the greater visibility and participation of women visionaries and activists. The seemingly unorthodox ideas of Erasmus of Rotterdam gained ground among both religious and secular thinkers. Regarded in conservative church circles as an ideological brother of Martin Luther, Erasmus brought to the fore critiques of church doctrine and ceremonies that had been voiced earlier by such Low Country medieval reform movements as the Brethren of the Common Life and their *devotio moderna*.[3] As John O'Malley explains, "[n]o Humanist wrote more about the godly or devout life than Erasmus; none was more widely read"; but during Loyola's lifetime, "the furious and fanatical vendetta against everything he wrote crested into a violent rage in certain ecclesiastical circles in Rome and elsewhere".[4] To be a follower of Erasmus was to be viewed as a sympathizer with, if not an adherent of, Lutheranism. Given the intense sentiment raised by issues of faith, the ideologies of religion became inseparable from those of national polity. Spain became identified with traditional Catholic doctrine, while other nations such as Germany and the Low Countries were represented in Spain as political adversaries in part because they had substantial Protestant populations. The intersection of the religious and the political, together with new intellectual currents introduced by humanism, created the potential for change and reaction against it that marked

[3] See Hein Blomestijn, Charles Caspers and Rijcklof Hofman, eds, *Spirituality Renewed: Studies on Significant Representatives of the Modern Devotion* (Leuven, 2003) for an overview of the movement and its major proponents.

[4] John O'Malley, "Renaissance Humanism and the Religious Culture of the First Jesuits," *Heythrop Journal* 31 (1990): 471–87, at p. 475.

the entire 16th century in Spain and throughout Europe. Loyola was profoundly affected by these diverse yet converging currents.[5]

A number of Loyola scholars have commented on his essentially medieval and somewhat inflexible world view. Joseph de Guibert characterizes him in the following manner:

> Ignatius was at the opposite pole from his contemporaries of the Renaissance. He was a man from the Middle Ages who had strayed into the sixteenth century in the height of its development… Ignatius's tastes, his tendencies, his uncompromising and serious supernaturalism placed him in violent opposition to the naturalism and skeptical dilettantism of so many humanists.[6]

It is to this medieval mindset that De Guibert attributes Loyola's seeming aversion to the writings of Erasmus. However, according to another Loyola scholar, "[t]here is in fact no evidence that Ignatius had firsthand knowledge of anything Erasmus wrote."[7] Regardless of what he may or may not have read, Loyola was definitely aware of the split between traditional scholastic thought and the new theological and philosophical movements. While his cultural heritage and education place him squarely in the camp of scholasticism, Ignatius clearly incorporated elements of humanism into his spiritual practices and religious beliefs. Whether or not this incorporation was deliberate or a manifestation of his own individualistic religious thought remains a question of debate, though many scholars opt for the latter possibility.

Early Life

Few details of family life in the Loyola castle in the province of Guipúzcoa are available. Loyola's father, Don Beltrán Yáñez de Loyola, was of ancient and noble Basque lineage. His mother, Marina Sánchez de Licona, was of equally noble descent, related through her mother's family to the counts of Oñate and the dukes of Nájera. Ignatius was the last of 13 children, according to the witnesses to his canonization process of 1595. He was born in the family castle almost 25 years after

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[5] O'Malley, "Renaissance Humanism," pp. 471–87. See also Terence O'Reilly, "Erasmus, Ignatius Loyola, and Orthodoxy," *Journal of Theological Studies* 30 (1979): 115–27.

[6] Joseph de Guibert, *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice* (Chicago, 1964), p. 166. Hereafter cited as De Guibert.

[7] O'Malley, "Renaissance Humanism," p. 476.

his parents' marriage in 1567. Doña Marina, his mother, died during his infancy. "Iñigo" (who was named after an 11th-century Benedictine abbot) was sent to a wet-nurse, the wife of the town blacksmith. According to his biographers, it was this surrogate mother who provided the child Ignatius with his first experience of love, devotion and trust, although W. W. Meissner believes that the loss of his biological mother at infancy would have a profound "psychic impact" on his subsequent development.[8]

The absence of his biological mother, his own early absence from the Loyola fortress, and the feudal / patriarchal character of late medieval Basque society all figure importantly in Ignatius's early development. Although it is impossible to know the exact nature of his upbringing, Christian piety and masculine values of honor and bravery appear to have been the primary influences on his childhood and adolescence. As Meissner describes it, "[t]he life of the Loyolas was a rich amalgam of deep religious tradition, sincere piety, burning passion and lust, fierce pride, and an attitude of aristocracy and nobility".[9] In this world of action (and often violence), physical prowess and personal valor were much more highly valued than intellect or artistic creativity. Given this emphasis upon strength, skill with the sword and worldly vanities (which often involved typical aristocratic activities such as duels and womanizing), it is not surprising that the young Loyola would have shown little inclination for the priesthood, preferring the life of courtier and soldier.

He was in many ways a typical young Basque *hidalgo* when, just prior to the death of his father, he entered the service of Juan Velázquez de Cuéllar, Queen Isabel's majordomo and treasurer-general of Castille (and also a relative by marriage of his mother's). The apprenticeship in the Velázquez palace at Arévalo provided Ignatius with his first real contact with courtly etiquette and luxurious living, very different from the hardy life of rural Guipúzcoa. During this period he acquired knowledge of music and literature as well as modes of social interaction with high-ranking members of the court and church hierarchy. But his primary interests remained those imbued in him by the Loyola household and the chivalric code of conduct to which it adhered: swordsmanship, riding, gambling, and courtly romance.

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[8] Meissner, pp. 9–12, 271, and 343–44.
[9] Meissner, p. 14.

Chivalric values of loyalty, generosity, unquestionable courage, and the pursuit of glory (often in the name of a lady love) were inspired not only by the masculine models of his father, six brothers and Loyola ancestors, but also by the popular literature of the time, best exemplified by the novel *Amadis of Gaul.* Often considered the prototype of the chivalric novel, it "became the manual of the finished caballero, the epopee of faithful lovers, the code of honour which moulded many generations".[10] Certainly it was the model for sequels and many other versions of the genre which prevailed throughout the first half of the 16th century. Ignatius read *Amadis* and similar works with great interest and states in his autobiography that as he made his way to Montserrat from Loyola castle, "[h]is mind was fully occupied with exploits, such as he read in *Amadís of Gaul* and other like books".[11] Immersed as he was in the chivalric code, it is not surprising that "the preconversion Ignatius was hyperactive, vital and exceptionally resistant to fatigue, grief and suffering".[12]

The preconversion Ignatius demonstrated these characteristics in his career as a soldier in the service of the Duke of Nájera, another distant relation of his mother. When the *comuneros* revolted against the Flemish administration of Charles V in 1521, the French took advantage of the situation in order to invade Spain and reclaim the province of Navarre for the French crown.[13] In the middle of May 1521, the French had arrived at Pamplona. Only a small garrison of Spanish soldiers remained there. Ignatius, absolutely resistant to the idea of surrender or even negotiation with the enemy, vehemently opposed the terms which the French offered and put himself at the head of the Spanish troops who were willing to defend the fortress. An eyewitness description of the French bombardment states that it lasted for six hours, after which the walls were breached. Ignatius was leading the Spanish resistance, sword in hand, when—as he describes in his autobiography—"a cannonball hit him in a leg, shattering it

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[10] James Brodrick, *St. Ignatius Loyola: The Pilgrim Years* (London, 1956), p. 40.

[11] Joseph N. Tylenda, trans. and ed., *A Pilgrim's Journey: The Autobiography of Ignatius of Loyola* (Wilmington, 1985), p. 26. Hereafter cited as Tylenda.

[12] Harvey D. Egan, *Ignatius Loyola the Mystic* (Wilmington, 1987), p. 36. Hereafter cited as Egan.

[13] Meissner, pp. 29–36, provides a succinct overview of the historical circumstances surrounding the uprising of the *comuneros* and the French invasion of Navarre. For a thorough analysis of these events, see Stephen Haliczer, *The Comunero Movement: The Forging of a Revolution, 1475–1521* (Madison, 1981).

completely, and since the ball passed between both legs the other one was likewise severely wounded".[14] With the fall of its leader, the fortress of Pamplona also fell.

Ignatius the Convert

It is this moment of grave injury which more than any other changed the course of Loyola's life:

> When the cannonball literally knocked his legs out from under him, Iñigo was about thirty years of age, a seasoned soldier, courtier, gentleman—in short, quite a successful man of the world…In a sense, the French artillery put an end to Iñigo de Loyola. If the man Loyola survived, the identity of Loyola was never to be the same.[15]

The evolution from soldier to saint had begun. The cannonball which struck him was the catalyst for his conversion from a life of worldly pleasures to one of action on behalf of the greater glory of God. Ignatius himself dismissed his life up to this point: "[u]p to his twenty-sixth year he was a man given to worldly vanities, and having a vain and overpowering desire to gain renown, he found special delight in the exercise of arms".[16]

The conversion was a long process, set in motion by a series of experiences which altered Ignatius's vision of the world and his own role in it. The torturous medical treatment of his injuries and lengthy convalescence immobilized the man of action and obliged him to engage in a type of reflection and self-examination to which he was unaccustomed. His physical suffering was immense. His endurance of it bespeaks Loyola's continuing concern with personal valor and corporal strength. Loyola describes the operation as "butchery" during which he "never uttered a word nor did he show any sign of pain other than clenching his fists".[17] When this surgery healed, it resulted in one leg being significantly shorter than the other, with the bones protruding in an unattractive fashion. He apparently could not tolerate the possibility of this deformity. According to Marjorie Boyle, "Loyola is absorbed with both divine and human observation and judgment:

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[14] Tylenda, p. 9.
[15] Meissner, p. 37.
[16] Tylenda, p. 7.
[17] Tylenda, p. 10.

vainglory. Diminution in physical stature meant humiliation in social status. Lameness was a defect".[18] Although the surgeons warned him of the excruciating pain he would suffer, Ignatius insisted upon the elimination of the protruding bone: "[b]ecause he was determined to make a way for himself in the world he could not tolerate such ugliness and thought it marred his appearance… He was determined to endure this martyrdom to satisfy his personal taste."[19] In addition to the physical bravery of such endurance, there are clearly elements of pride and willfulness in rejecting the surgeons' advice and endangering his life in order to improve his physical appearance.

Forced to remain in bed for several months, Ignatius availed himself of the few books which the Loyola castle possessed. His sister-in-law Magdalena provided him with the four-volume *Life of Jesus* by the Carthusian Ludolph of Saxony, written in the 14th century, and a copy of the popular *Flos sanctorum*, a collection of saints' lives by Jacobus de Voragine which had been circulating in Spain since about 1480. It is clear that the readings had a powerful effect on Ignatius's vision of his life and its purpose. This effect was not immediate, but occurred over an indefinite period of time, during which he continued to contemplate his worldly existence. As he recalled many years later in his autobiography:

> Setting his reading aside, he sometimes paused to think about the things he had read, and at other times he thought of the worldly things that formerly occupied his mind. Of the many idle things that came to him, one took such a hold on his heart that, without his realizing it, it engrossed him for two or three hours at a time. He dreamed what he would achieve in the service of a certain lady and thought of the means he would take to go to the land where she lived, the clever sayings and words he would speak to her, and the knightly deeds he would perform for her.[20]

Although he was still attached to his prior life of soldier / courtier, Ignatius had made a connection between the "heroic virtue" of the saints whose lives he had read and the chivalric code. Michael Foss explains this connection: "Sanctity and chivalry are both types of perfection, and both are to be reached only through sacrifice and training.

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[18] Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle, *Loyola's Acts: The Rhetoric of the Self* (Berkeley, 1997), p. 31. Hereafter cited as Boyle.

[19] Tylenda, p. 11.

[20] Tylenda, p. 13.

Both present their challenges. They are related worlds".[21] It is not surprising that in reading the opening lines of Ludolph's work ("A man can have no foundation other than Jesus Christ… Therefore, whoever wishes to escape the damnation due his sins and to be corrected in spirit, must not forsake that foundation, because there he will find remedies for all his needs"),[22] Ignatius began to discern an alternate set of conventions requiring equal dedication and fervor. In his preface, Fray Gauberto Vagad, the translator of the Spanish version of the *Flos sanctorum*, "opened before Ignatius's eyes unsuspected horizons of glorious service. But above all Fray Gauberto clearly set forth, in the center of these admirable men, 'the eternal Prince, Christ Jesus' as the incomparable Chief whose ever victorious flag these knights of God were following".[23] Furthermore, Ignatius's competitive spirit was aroused by the deeds of men like St. Dominic and St. Francis, who served as models to follow and perhaps excel in this new quest for glory. As Tylenda explains, "[t]hroughout these thoughts he used to say to himself, 'St. Dominic did this, so I have to do it too. St. Francis did this, so I have to do it too.'"[24]

Earthly matters continued to exercise some attraction for Loyola. He appears to have vacillated for some time among the "diverse thoughts" in his imagination. It is at this point that the convalescent reader / meditator began to realize or "discern" the difference in impact between the worldly thoughts and more spiritual ones, finding himself unsatisfied by the former and consoled by the latter. This early ability to distinguish between the effects or consequences of thoughts and feelings and therefore identify their source as good or evil is the basis of the "discernment of spirits" which would become a hallmark of Ignatian spirituality. His interest in religious readings increased until he became completely absorbed in them, to the extent that he resolved to consciously imitate the saints upon his recuperation by journeying to Jerusalem. He began to copy passages from his readings and to speak about spiritual matters with family members. The readings and their effect upon his vision of self may be considered the first crucial step in his progress from a knight of the Spanish crown to a "knight

[21] Michael Foss, *The Founding of the Jesuits* (London, 1969), p. 68.
[22] Cited in Foss, p. 68.
[23] De Guibert, p. 26.
[24] Tylenda, p. 14.

of Christ", a sort of preparation for and initiation into the longer emotional, psychological and spiritual journey which awaited him.

Several specific incidents mark the conscious rejection of a former self which is part of Ignatius's conversion experience. The earliest and most important occurred in the form of a vision of the Virgin Mary which he described in the following manner:

> One night as he lay sleepless, he clearly saw the likeness of our Lady with the holy Child Jesus, and because of this vision he enjoyed an excess of consolation for a remarkably long time. He felt so great a loathsomeness for all his past life, especially for the deeds of the flesh, that it seemed to him that all the images that had been previously imprinted on his mind were now erased. Thus from that hour until August 1553, when this is being written, he never again consented, not even in the least matter, to the motions of the flesh. Because of this effect in him he concluded that this had been God's doing, though he did not dare to specify it any further…[25]

On the one hand, it is obvious that Loyola had no control over this vision. It occurred spontaneously and while he was in a wakeful state. He discerned that it was divinely inspired since it completely eliminated desires of the flesh, though he was reluctant to enter into any detail about it. On the other hand, his reaction to this vision was so intense that it caused him to willfully reject what had been a central aspect of his life: carnality. It is clear in the reference to "images imprinted in his mind" that although his convalescence had prevented any physical relationships, libidinal pursuits had continued to occupy his thoughts. There is no evidence that Loyola ever again engaged in such fleshly behavior, whatever suspicions he may have aroused by his spiritual counseling of women. As Boyle explains, "Loyola enjoys through the visitation of the Madonna the liberation from concupiscence that was her singular privilege".[26]

This experience may be considered the beginning of his final conversion to a spiritual life and reveals the extent to which it was both conscious and willed (albeit, in his view, determined and initiated by God). His family members noticed the difference in his conduct as a

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[25] Tylenda, p. 16.

[26] Boyle, p. 41. Boyle (p. 42) sees in this "nocturnal cure of concupiscence" the influence of hagiography, and more specifically, the visit of Lady Continence to St. Augustine as described in his *Confessions*: "Just as Continence appeared to exhort Augustine about the spiritual instability of his legs, so does the Madonna appear to Loyola in the same debility."

result of this interior experience, although he offered no details of an external change. The content of the vision suggests that the Virgin Mary may be a substitute for the "lady" about whom the convalescing knight had fantasized earlier. As the embodiment of female purity, maternity and virtue as well as physical beauty, the Holy Mother became the lady whom Ignatius had envisioned serving in the chivalric mode. Indeed, at one point he considered defending the concept of the virgin birth in much the same way that a knight would defend his lady's reputation.[27] From the moment of this vision onward, Loyola's life enters a markedly different phase, best characterized as a journey that is both physical and spiritual. In his autobiography he refers to himself as "the Pilgrim", and this is his prevailing idea of self for the rest of his life.

Pilgrims normally made an itinerary of devotions by visiting sanctuaries along the route to their final destinations. After taking leave of his family, Loyola's first stop on his journey to Jerusalem was the shrine of Our Lady of Montserrat, where he left his sword and dagger; exchanged his knightly attire for a pilgrim's sackcloth robe, hemp girdle and staff; and spent the night in vigil standing and kneeling before the statue of the Black Madonna. Meissner concludes: "He was, as it were a 'knight of Christ', consecrating himself in the night long watch of arms".[28] The following day, in order to avoid being recognized on the road to Barcelona, he took back roads which led to the small town of Manresa, a detour which would have momentous consequences. Although he had originally planned to stay in Manresa only a few days, he ended up staying almost a year. During this time he experienced some of the most profoundly transformative experiences of his life.

Ignatius the Ascetic / Mystic

The novice pilgrim and ascetic began his Manresa existence with extreme forms of penitence, most of which were carried out in a cave overlooking the valley of the Cardoner River. In addition to fasting, he engaged in conduct that totally contradicted that of his previous courtly existence, allowing his hair to grow without cutting or comb-

[27] See Tylenda, pp. 22–23.
[28] Meissner, p. 45.

ing it. He also allowed his fingernails and toenails to grow without attending to them and deprived himself of sleep. At night he spent several hours in prayer; during the day he roamed the streets begging for alms. Ignatius was following the principle of *agere contra* (to go against or oppose natural desire by doing the opposite of its dictates). His life was typically ascetic in his effort to eliminate the sensual experience of the body. Yet, paradoxically, in his eagerness to demonstrate his asceticism and lack of vanity through these external signs, he was drawing attention to himself and gaining fame in the Manresa area as a holy man and fool for Christ. His concern with appearances bespeaks the contradictory currents underlying his outward humility: "Loyola is deliberately being shameless, courting personal dishonor and social infamy. Yet his self-humiliation, invested in external appearances proves not necessarily to be humility."[29] Rather, it is a kind of inverted honor in lack of honor as symbolized by his unkempt exterior. In fact, the outward display is a form of the same vainglory that had prompted him to insist upon the surgical correction of his deformed leg.

The emphasis upon the externals of sanctity gradually gave way to a more moderate interiorized version as Ignatius entered upon the arduous trajectory of prayer, meditation and self-examination which would culminate in his recognition of a different self. During this period he underwent intense inner turmoil and self-doubt, reflected in a variety of spiritual and emotional states. He began to see on a regular basis

> a form in the air near him, and this form gave him great consolation because it was exceedingly beautiful. He did not understand very clearly what it really was, but it somehow seemed to have the shape of a serpent and had many things that shone like eyes, but were not eyes.[30]

Loyola eventually recognized that this strange recurring vision, although at first a source of great delight, was a representation of the devil in a particularly alluring form. He dismissed it with his staff, creating the impression that he could exert some control over it; yet it continued to trouble him over an extensive period of time.

The period following the first appearance of the serpent is one of grave crisis in which the still-novice mystic was ridden by doubts and even despair concerning the course he had chosen. Dissatisfied with

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[29] Boyle, p. 71.
[30] Tylenda, p. 29.

confession as a way of expiating past offenses, he experienced intense scruples and temptations, of which the beautiful flying serpent was just one. He heard inner voices, which he assumed to be diabolical, challenging his decision to spend the rest of his life as an ascetic ("And how will you be able to put up with this for the seventy years you have ahead of you?").[31] He began to lose the joy he had felt in prayer and the mass. His spiritual condition fluctuated between desolation and consolation, but eventually brought him to the brink of the greatest temptation of all: suicide. At some point he was overcome by disgust with his self-obsession and determined never again to think about or confess sins of the past. This decision to make a complete break with an errant past resolved the despondency and spiritual stagnation into which he had fallen and demonstrates the self-analysis which is typical of his career (although, as always, he attributed the decision to God). From this moment on, Ignatius would steadfastly pursue his goal of sanctity, never doubting the route he had chosen.

Once Ignatius had experienced this "dark night of the soul", he continued his mystical education at Manresa. He began to read what became his preferred pious work and a principal source of Jesuit spirituality: the *Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis. It is a work which calls for simplicity in the practice of religious life. Its most general message is "the call to inwardness, to reflection and self-awareness, to personal appropriation of religious truth in holiness of life. The *Imitation* purported to speak to the heart and from the heart".[32] De Guibert sees this work as the most important channel through which medieval currents of piety such as the *devotio moderna* entered Ignatius's spiritual formation.[33] It is impossible to ascertain exactly how much of Loyola's spirituality is attributable to the *Imitation*; but in its insistence on contempt for the world, on submission to the movement of grace, on the value of familiarity with God who can be found in all things, as well as on the necessity for self-regulation of disorderly inclinations, Kempis's work is a significant influence.

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[31] Tylenda, p. 30.

[32] John O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1993), p. 266. According to O'Malley, "[u]pon Ignatius and others, the influence of *Imitation of Christ* and similar works antedated scholasticism and humanism and was more profound" (p. 264).

[33] See De Guibert, pp. 156–57.

In his autobiography Loyola compares his situation at Manresa to that of a schoolboy under the tutelage of God, who leads him through a series of steps to the experience of inner illumination which is the mystic's primary objective. The steps or "points" begin with a vision of the Holy Trinity in the figure of three keys of a musical instrument. This image reiterated the inseparability of the tripartite divinity and inspired his life-long devotion to a trinitarian God. The vision also evoked a reaction of uncontrollable tears and sobbing, one of Loyola's principal responses to divine grace. The experience of tears was often an expression of joy or spiritual consolation rather than sorrow. Tears became the most common external characteristic of Ignatian spirituality. His *Spiritual Diary* in particular documents the frequency with which he experienced this "gift".[34]

The second, third and fourth points in his spiritual formation at Manresa include a vision of God creating the world from light, the decision to abandon his extremes of physical slovenliness, and times of prayer during which he perceived with "inner eyes" the vague human forms of Christ and the Virgin Mary. The visions of Christ recurred as many as 40 times and confirmed his faith to the extent that "if there were no Scriptures to teach us these matters of faith, he would still resolve to die for them on the basis of what he had seen".[35]

The fifth and final point is the culmination of this series of extraordinary phenomena. Recalling the intensity of this experience over 30 years later, Ignatius emphasizes the non-visual component: "though he saw no vision, he understood and perceived many things, numerous spiritual things as well as matters touching on faith and learning, and this was with an elucidation so bright that all things seemed new to him."[36] It is precisely the awareness that something completely new and transformative is occurring that characterizes the mysticism of infused contemplation, attainable only through God's special activity upon the chosen individual.[37] Although the saint is unable to describe

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[34] Commenting on the frequency of Loyola's references to tears, De Guibert states, "it seems to me that no other saint, man or woman, has in practice given to these tears a place equal with that of Ignatius" (62). See *The Jesuits* for De Guibert's analysis of this mystical experience (62–66).

[35] Tylenda, p. 38.

[36] Tylenda, pp. 38–39.

[37] In *Ignatius of Loyola the Mystic*, Egan comments: "By actual experience the person becomes directly and immediately aware of God's loving, purifying, enlightening and unifying presence. The person realizes that something totally new is occurring" (24).

the details of this incident, he understands this illumination as greater than all the previous graces he had received from God "in the whole course of his past life now having passed his sixty second year (his age at the narration of this event)".[38] According to De Guibert, these Manresa graces

> were in reality eminent intellectual lights, directly infused by God into his faculty of understanding; and furthermore, the images which he recorded were simply the reaction from these lights in his soul—his soul which was by nature imaginative but still very poor in symbolic images adaptable to this order of understanding.

This same Loyola scholar views this "experimental intellectual consciousness of God" as evidence that the future Jesuit was "introduced, even from the days at Manresa, in the way of highest contemplation".[39] Similarly, Meissner concludes that the events at Manresa "reflect the intensity of the psychological effects being wrought in the pilgrim's soul…We are dealing here with mystical experiences of the highest order".[40] The pilgrim himself recognized that during the fifth point he had become "another man" with a "different understanding from what he had previously…" This recognition can be interpreted as a kind of closure on the initial phase of his transformation, which had begun at Loyola castle with a vision of the Virgin. Manresa is the truly radical or decisive phase of his interior journey. It is also where he began to write the work which is now inseparable from his name and Jesuit spirituality.

The *Spiritual Exercises*

Although the book did not appear in published form until 1548, core ideas or premises were present in the notes that Loyola kept at Manresa. The title of the work is indicative of the spirit / action duality

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[38] Tylenda, p. 39. Ignatius narrated this portion of his life to Father Gonçalves da Câmara some time in 1555. Since he gave his age as 62, he appeared to believe that his birth year was 1493.

[39] De Guibert, p. 31. According to this author, "[t]wo things strike us at once: the remarkably great poverty of the imaginative element of these visions, and the contrasting importance and richness of their content. Thirty years after the occurrence of these visions, Ignatius still attributed this importance to them, and this fact would be inexplicable if we were dealing with simple imaginative visions, even those in which the images are preternatural in their origin."

[40] Meissner, p. 82.

which characterized all of Ignatius's piety. The *Spiritual Exercises* are not meant as a book to be read, but rather "a set of materials, directives and suggestions for the person helping another through that course."[41] The purpose of the *Exercises*, as stated in the opening paragraph, is "preparing and disposing our soul to rid itself of all its disordered affections and then, after their removal, of seeking and finding God's will in the ordering of our life for the salvation of our soul."[42] Intended to be carried out over a period of four weeks in a "retreat" or situation devoted exclusively to them, the *Exercises* are especially designed to help the person who has to make a choice about the future (i.e. marriage, a religious vocation or other significant life change). The First Week, or set of exercises which is required in order to continue, consists of two parts: first, an examination or review of one's life up to that point; and second, an increasing awareness of God's mercy and love, regardless of one's sins and failings. The following Weeks' exercises were constructed to confirm the first, while moving the participant on to the consideration of a "vocation" or station in life and an "election" concerning it.

The structure of the last three Weeks follows the story of Jesus in the New Testament, with each week presenting material for meditation upon the events of Jesus's life. This series ends with the Fourth Week, which proposes prayers concerning the Resurrection and after. The *Exercises* end with a "Contemplation to Attain the Love of God". Various supplementary materials follow the "Contemplation", the most important of which are the two sets of rules about "discerning spirits". These sections deal with the inner experiences of consolation and desolation that could occur at any time during the retreat: "[i]n a few pages they come as close as anything does to revealing the most basic assumptions Ignatius entertained about the dynamics of an individual's relationship to God, heightened in the individual's awareness and intensity during this period of seclusion, review, contemplation, and if all went well, profound changes."[43] The Rules for the Discernment of Spirits assume that God and the Devil are vying for the individual human soul; hence it is necessary to be able to distinguish which is the origin of inner movements of consolation or desolation. The *Exercises* provide a kind of spiritual training so that a person may discern the

[41] O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p. 37.
[42] Cited in O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p. 37.
[43] O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p. 41.

source of his or her feelings by trying to see where they are leading and thereby recognize the presence of God, the source of all good. The process of "discernment" became one of the operative principles of the Jesuits' religious practice and was essential in promoting God as the immediate source of the individual's "election" concerning his / her life.

In their emphasis upon direct, unmediated communication with God resulting from inner inspiration, the *Exercises* quickly drew fire from critics who viewed this experience as verging on the practices of the Illuminists.[44] Another principle which aroused their suspicions was that of "indifference", according to which the person directing the exercises should not urge a certain decision or "election" upon the retreatant. Rather, the spiritual counselor should hold himself "indifferent" so that the individual could arrive at a decision through God. Thus the counselor could not urge a monastic life of poverty, chastity, and obedience in preference to alternatives facing the individual. According to critics, this "indifference" denied the spiritual superiority of these monastic virtues, and therefore smacked of Erasmus, whose teaching on these issues overlapped somewhat with Loyola's ideas.

The *Exercises* continued to be controversial but became the primary Jesuit recruitment tool for a real commitment / conversion to an individual-centered experience of God. The text of the book

> lay not in a scholar's study, an academic disputation, an inquisitorial courtroom, or an ecclesiastical council. It was not a counterstatement to Luther, Erasmus or the Alumbrados. It originated in religious experience, first the author's and then others'. Its basic elements were well in place before the author had any theological education. It is not, therefore, a book of dogma, but a dogmatic book—that is, it assumes that its basic message is the common Christian heritage and that that message, therefore, need not be argued.[45]

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[44] The Illuminists, known as *alumbrados* ("enlightened ones") in Spain, extolled the seeking of spiritual perfection through inner illumination. They also rejected many of the ceremonies of the traditional church. Although Spanish church authorities associated Illuminists with Erasmus, they were not intellectuals. Rather, their approach to religion was emotional and intuitive, and even anti-intellectual. Many of their members were *conversos*, or Jews who had converted to Christianity. All of these factors made them the target of Inquisitorial persecution. On the relationship between Loyola and the Illuminists, see Luis Fernández, "Iñigo de Loyola y los alumbrados," *Hispania sacra* 35 (1983): 585–680.

[45] O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p. 42.

Ignatius the Pilgrim

The pilgrimage to Jerusalem that had been delayed for almost a year while he was at Manresa marks another stage in Loyola's early evolution as a mystic. After an arduous journey to Barcelona (his point of departure), Ignatius arrived in Jerusalem, where the precarious political situation prevented him from staying longer than 19 days. During this brief stay he was enthralled by visits to holy places, an experience which inspired a desire to stay in Jerusalem permanently. The Franciscan provincial at Jerusalem decided against this, due to the possibility of kidnap or murder by Turks who controlled the city, or death from the plague. Although he initially resisted this decision (expressing his determination to remain in Jerusalem come what may), when finally confronted with the possibility of excommunication for disobedience of the provincial, the "pilgrim" came to view the ordered departure from the Holy Land as God's will. He did not depart, however, before secretly returning to the places where Christ had walked and prayed. His devotion to Christ clearly emerges, as is evident when he returns to the Mount of Olives to observe the direction in which Christ's feet were pointing when he ascended into heaven:

> Jerusalem marked Ignatius in a way second only to Manresa. He would never forget what it meant to be near Christ in his historical existence. This Christ-centredness in all its concreteness and detail is foundational to his mysticism. Ignatius would remain the Jerusalem pilgrim even during his many years in Rome as general of the Society of Jesus.[46]

In fact, Loyola continued to travel extensively, although not always with the purpose of worshipping at holy places; and his inner pilgrimage continued until the end of his life. He certainly saw himself paradoxically as being in a permanent state of transition, signified by his use of the word "pilgrim" to refer to himself in the narrative of his post-conversion life, often titled *The Pilgrim's Tale.* This pilgrim identity connoted an obvious contrast with his courtier / warrior background, and his substitution of the noun for his own name reveals the extent to which he wished to obliterate the self in favor of the allegorical or universal figure seeking redemption on a quest for sanctity. Yet, despite the shedding of individual identity evident in the adoption of the depersonalized noun, Loyola's journey is highly individual. This extends

[46] Egan, p. 47.

even to his decision not to travel to Jerusalem accompanied by guides or to carry any money with him. As Boyle notes, "[h]e is everyman but man on his own—a character cast from the individualism that is acknowledged to identify renaissance culture and society".[47] He had a clear idea of what he would be as a pilgrim, and he would tolerate no obstacles to his plan. His insistence on carrying out this plan illustrates the extent to which Ignatius the pilgrim / mystic retained the strong sense of self which had characterized his pre-conversion life.

Ignatius the Student

In addition to tracing the steps of Christ, Ignatius wished to stay in Jerusalem to help bring souls to God. His obligatory departure compelled him to think of other ways in which he could fulfill this apostolic mission. He concluded that he could only do so by increasing his knowledge. Loyola's purpose was not to become a scholar, but rather to acquire a greater understanding of the ways in which he could serve God through learning. He also wanted to acquire the theological training necessary to enter the priesthood. He began this education in Barcelona and continued at Alcalá de Henares. Never an intellectual, in both places he encountered some difficulty in balancing his studies of grammar, rhetoric and philosophy with his desire to be among the people, helping to bring souls to salvation. His program of study was not systematic. At Alcalá in particular he embarked upon the study of varied material (the logic of De Soto, the physics of Albertus Magnus, the theology of Peter Lombard) which he was unable to synthesize in a coherent fashion. Later, Loyola would use this chaotic approach to learning as a negative model and argue for the graded hierarchy of educational aims and methods which would form the basis of Jesuit pedagogy.

Throughout his student period, certain features of Loyola's spirituality became increasingly apparent. Despite his decision to immerse himself in the studies necessary to qualify for the priesthood and thus work for the greater glory of God, his primary approach to sanctity was not through contemplation, but rather an active apostolate. His most important tool for leading souls toward salvation was instructional

[47] Boyle, p. 153.

conversation. Loyola's ability to discourse movingly and effectively on spiritual topics had already begun to gain him renown in Manresa; and as his knowledge and experience increased, so did his apparent charisma. His followers and supporters, most of them women, spread his fame and, as a result, drew the attention of the Inquisition. The idea of an itinerant holy man expounding upon religion and acquiring a cult following aroused the suspicion of the Holy Office, which investigated Loyola both in Alcalá—where he was imprisoned and prohibited from teaching—and Salamanca, where he spent three weeks in jail. In her statement before the Inquisitors at Alcalá, Ana de Benavente testified that Ignatius had "expounded the articles of faith, the mortal sins, the five senses, the three faculties of the soul and other good things concerning the service of God, and told her things out of the gospels".[48] As Michael Foss observes, "Ignatius's troubles stemmed more from his audience than from his matter or his method. His words, so plain and orthodox, had an unexpected effect on the susceptible and immature minds of young girls".[49] Loyola's contact with poor and marginalized women increased official distrust concerning his activities and was a key factor in his later decision to exclude women from the Jesuit order. Although he was finally acquitted of any taint of Illuminism (one of the Inquisition's principal targets), Loyola's Salamanca experience convinced him to complete his education in Paris. Ignatius himself did not knowingly associate with Illuminists, but it appears that some of his followers at Alcalá did have connections with the movement and were thus drawn to his reliance on personal experience rather than erudition as the basis of his teachings. Ignatius hoped to escape the surveillance of the Holy Office in Paris.

Nevertheless, the pilgrim's seven years in Paris were not without problems. He entered the University of Paris at a time of continuing tension between Spain and France as both countries were struggling to attain European hegemony. Furthermore, the Reformation was in full swing. Leo X had condemned Luther in 1520. His heretical works were available in Paris by 1525. It was not an atmosphere conducive to intellectual contemplation or sustained academic endeavor for one

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[48] Foss, *The Founding of the Jesuits*, p. 80.

[49] Foss, p. 80. There are various accounts of Loyola's dealings with women. For an overview of his counseling of women during the years 1522–37, see Meissner, pp. 242–46. For a more detailed study, see Wenceslao Soto Aruñedo, "Ignacio de Loyola y la mujer," *Proyección* 44 (1997): 299–318.

of Loyola's restless energy. The much-older-than-average student was also burdened by his continuing insolvency and found that begging for alms was not compatible with serious study. In addition he was perceived by university authorities as distracting serious students with his spiritual conversations. According to Meissner,

> …Iñigo would not have cut a very impressive figure at this time. Aged about forty, he was a former man of arms who had been forced out of service by his war wound, which left him with a deformed leg and noticeable limp. His life after his unceremonious discharge had been that of a derelict and beggar. His plans were hardly decisive or specific, and he seemed to have little ambition for a career in any worldly sense, and his drift seemed to be toward the priesthood but nothing more. He was desperately poor, not physically strong, and often sickly, troubled by recurrent abdominal pains.[50]

Loyola's unprepossessing image, together with his record of encounters with the Inquisition, made him fair game for scrutiny by both church and university officials who viewed him as a distraction for other students at best, and a heterodox subversive at worst.

None of his difficulties at Paris deterred the ever-determined pilgrim / mystic from pursuing his studies or from gathering followers for God's service. Among the students attracted by the force of his personality and the unique plan of spiritual discipline set forth in the *Spiritual Exercises* were six of the original nine Jesuits.[51] Under Ignatius's guidance, each of them decided to consecrate himself to the mission for the salvation of souls and service of God. In August 1534 these companions concluded that they should pursue their labors by converting unbelievers in Jerusalem. If this were impossible, they would place themselves at the disposal of the Pope. As yet they had no idea of forming a religious order; but from the moment they took vows to pursue their common mission, they began to live a sort of common life together, a life which would culminate in 1539 with the decision to form the Jesuit order:

> Hindsight surely allows us to see in the event of that August day the cornerstone of the future Society of Jesus. Those who laid it came from different nations and different social classes, and their ages ranged from nineteen to about forty-three. They were bound together by the leader-

[50] Meissner, p. 143.

[51] These were Francis Xavier, Peter Faber, Diego Laynez, Alfonso Salmerón, Simón Rodríguez, and Nicolás Bobadilla.

> ship of Ignatius, by bonds of friendship that in some instances were of only a few fragile months, by their study at the same *alma mater*, and most deeply by the religious experience of the *Exercises*, in which each of them had been guided for a month or so by their author.[52]

Despite many obstacles, Loyola did complete his course of studies at Paris, receiving the bachelor's degree in 1532 and becoming master of philosophy in 1535. The name Ignatius appears on his master's diploma, and from this point until 1542 he uses both the name Iñigo in Spanish correspondence and Ignatius in Latin letters. Although many have assumed that Ignatius was a latinized version of Iñigo, others attribute the Latin name to Loyola's devotion to Saint Ignatius of Antioch, whom he had first encountered in the *Flos sanctorum*. The decision in 1542 to use "Ignatius" exclusively indicates the final adoption of a new identity, "the identity of the dedicated follower of Christ, the courageous warrior of God who will face all dangers, count no sacrifice too great, no challenge too daunting, no battle too difficult… The shift in names reflects the transformation of Iñigo de Loyola into Ignatius of Rome".[53]

From 1535 until the confirmation of the Jesuit order in 1540, Iñigo / Ignatius continued his peripatetic route to sanctity, returning to Azpeitia, where he addressed a number of local issues (such as priests' concubines), preached daily on the commandments, and converted several women of scandalous reputation. Upon his arrival in Venice in 1536, the future founder of the Company of Jesus experienced problems of hostility from entrenched church authorities such as Cardinal Gian Carafa (later Pope Paul IV), who would steadfastly oppose Loyola and his companions (or Iñiguists, as they were commonly designated in Italy). Unable to journey to Jerusalem as they had originally planned, the band of nine companions made its way to Rome in 1537, stopping at a small shrine at La Storta, a few miles outside the city. Here Iñigo underwent one of the most powerful mystical visions of his career.

The Storta vision is significant because it reveals and reiterates several aspects of Loyola's spirituality. From the days of his vision of the Madonna and Holy Child at Loyola castle, he had perceived the Holy Mother as a mediator between himself and God and had directed many requests to her to place him at the side of her Son. The illumination at

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[52] O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p. 32.
[53] Meissner, p. 155.

Storta indicated that she had mediated for him. More important even than the Virgin's mediation is the union of the Father and the Son with Ignatius and their acceptance of his service and commitment, as well as a positive prognostication for the mission at Rome. In his own words, "One day, a few miles before reaching Rome, while praying in a church, he felt a great change in his soul and so clearly did he see God the Father place him with Christ, His Son, that he had no doubts that God the Father did place him with His Son."[54] Furthermore, in this same apparition, the Father spoke directly to Iñigo, informing him that he would prosper at Rome, and also spoke to Christ, instructing him to take "this man" as his servant. Christ then directly addressed Iñigo, stating: "I want you to serve us (Father and Son)". As Egan explains, "The graces of La Storta confirmed Ignatius's Trinitarian, christocentric service and ecclesial mysticism."[55]

Ignatius the Founder / Administrator

The entrance into Rome marks the beginning of the final period of Ignatius's life, a period of extreme activity during which the Jesuit order was founded and confirmed, and he was elected its first general. Under his leadership it became the most influential order in the Catholic reform. After the group's decision in 1539 to vow obedience to a common superior and live according to formal constitutions, Pope Paul III approved the formation of the order in 1540. Loyola was elected its general. He declined on the grounds that he would rather obey than command. He was elected again, but consented to serve only after submitting the matter to his confessor.

Why the reluctance to accept a position for which he was undeniably the most qualified and to which he was unanimously elected? Certainly Ignatius recognized his own centrality in the formation of the order. He may have been hesitant to accept the total authority which the role of general entailed.[56] Nevertheless he reluctantly accepted the

[54] Tylenda, p. 113. Ignatius, as usual, provides no details of this vision. For other, more detailed accounts, see the note at the bottom of Tylenda, p. 113.

[55] Egan, p. 55.

[56] Meissner contends that Ignatius's character had definite authoritarian elements, and that perhaps as a result of this, he struggled with the exercise of authority throughout his career (pp. 228–37).

leadership of the newly formed Company of Jesus. Egan describes the scene thus:

> On April 22, 1541, the group pronounced their vows in the church of St. Paul Outside the Walls. The Companions of Jesus had formed a single body, had a single heart and soul, obeyed a single leader and had Christ for their head. Through the mystical imagination of Ignatius, they had become a mystical body, united by mystical friendship. In short, they were the church in miniature, bound together by the Holy Spirit in faith, hope and love.[57]

Although the order would thrive under Loyola's leadership, it did face serious problems, not the least of which was the continuing suspicion which it elicited from church conservatives. According to the *Constitutions* over which Loyola labored for ten years before their approval in 1551, the Company of Jesus had rejected the monastic lifestyle in favor of active service in the world. One of the great differences between the Company and other orders would be its mobility and internationalism. Their pledge to "go anywhere to any region whatsoever" in obedience to the Pope made it necessary to eliminate certain standard elements of cloistered life such as the singing of the divine office and mass. In addition, severe penitential exercises that could sap the strength needed for their practical mission of service to souls were excluded from the regimen. Other key aspects of monasticism such as a fixed religious attire, capitular governance, the regular ministry of religious women and the foundation of a women's branch were also not a part of the Jesuit organization. Loyola envisioned an order of "contemplation in action," an ideal which "positioned the Jesuits strategically at odds with the Protestant Reformation as well as with the Dominican Order, which was to become an enduring and sometimes openly hostile critic of the Society".[58] Furthermore, the emphasis upon absolute obedience to one common superior or "general", which had fallen into disfavor in other orders, resulted in a highly hierarchized system of governance which may reflect the founder's military training.[59] In this

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[57] Egan, p. 57.

[58] Michael Higgins and Douglas Letson, *The Jesuit Mystique* (Chicago, 1995), p. 16.

[59] O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (p. 45), comments on the military image of the Company of Jesus, stating: "The Jesuits more generally made use of other metaphors to describe what they were about, and, although they often thought of themselves as doing battle… their references to the Society as a squadron or an army are exceedingly rare. Contrary to another popular misapprehension, the superior in Rome is 'general' only in the sense of the adjective, that is, he is the overall superior."

hierarchy, God is the summit of authority, and the Company's general is his "vicar on earth". Accordingly, the general's will is God's will and must be obeyed as such.

The last 15 years of Loyola's life were spent almost entirely at the Jesuit house in Rome as he engaged in the onerous tasks of administering the new and burgeoning order. These responsibilities did not, however, preclude his participation in many of the charitable activities for which the society had become famous. He actively collaborated in the work of the House of Martha, founded to save prostitutes and homeless young women who appeared in danger of "perdition". This activity was viewed with considerable consternation by many church prelates, who were outraged that religious men would work on behalf of "fallen women". Ignatius also worked for the conversion of the Jewish population in Rome and actually had to provide residences for the large number of catechumens. While such conversions certainly stemmed from the anti-Semitism of the times, paradoxically they also saved large numbers of converted Jews from prejudice and even persecution. Similarly, the general would not yield to pressure not to admit novices of Jewish origin, as was the norm for many other religious orders. He had on a number of occasions shocked his Spanish colleagues by expressing a wish to be Jewish so as to be of the same race as Christ. His fundamental posture vis-à-vis the Jews, however, reflects acceptance of the anti-Semitism which marked the Spain in which he was raised: "The original ten companions and their first recruits in Italy were for the most part Iberian expatriates. They thus carried a special awareness of Jewish-Christian tension with them into Italy, where it also happened to be reaching new heights".[60]

Unlike his seeming liberalism toward Jews, Ignatius's attitude toward women exhibits a surprisingly traditionalist stance. At the same time that he (and the other Jesuits) worked to improve the situation of socially and economically disadvantaged women, Loyola steadfastly refused to provide spiritual counsel to women in convent communities or to form a female branch of the Jesuits.[61] His own experience

[60] O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p. 192.

[61] The one very important exception that Ignatius made with regard to the entry of women into the Jesuits was that of Princess Juana of Spain, sister of Philip II. Obviously unable to resist a royal request, a specially constituted committee of Jesuits secretly admitted Juana into the order under the code name "Mateo Sánchez". She entered the order in 1554 and remained a Jesuit until her death in 1573. In *The First Jesuits* (p. 76), O'Malley states: "[s]he in fact threw her support behind the Jesuits in

with women of dubious social standing in Manresa and Salamanca had been one of the reasons for his imprisonment, and his large and visible female following had been a source of constant suspicion. It is also quite possible that despite the economic and political support he received from women of varied backgrounds, Ignatius—due to his patriarchal cultural heritage—had already fully assimilated the reigning misogynistic ideology which represented females as intellectually and morally inferior to men. His misgivings about the order's contact with women of certain social levels are evident in his mandate that "[w]e must be always on our guard and hold no conversations with women unless they be ladies of prominence."[62] One Loyola scholar perceives his ambivalence toward women as evidence that there is a "maternal stratum" in the relationships between the saint and the women who became his spiritual daughters and friends, a stratum which "resulted from his inability to resolve the unconscious peremptory infantile needs that bound him to his lost biological mother".[63] Nonetheless, Loyola continued to receive backing from upper-class Spanish and Italian women who were drawn to his personal charisma and / or found the Jesuit mission worthy of their support.[64]

With regard to the Protestant reform, Loyola engaged in battle against "heresy"; but as O'Reilly observes, his personal involvement did not develop until after the decision to found the Society of Jesus. In 1550 the founder revised the stated purpose of the order to read: "the defense and propagation of the faith and…the advancement of souls".[65] This change of priorities from the original papal bull incorporating the order reveals the extent to which Loyola and the Company had become involved in the defense of Catholicism. Ignatius directed Jesuit missions in Protestant lands and worked tirelessly to found a college in Rome for the training of novices from various German provinces. In a letter to Peter Canisius, the most important exponent

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some important matters, but she also caused them much anxiety. The experiment was never repeated."

[62] Tylenda, p. 114.

[63] Meissner, p. 271. See note 49 above. See also the General Introduction to Hugo Rahner's *St. Ignatius Loyola: Letters to Women* (New York, 1960) for an overview of Loyola's dealings with women.

[64] See Olwen Hufton, "Altruism and Reciprocity: The Early Jesuits and Their Female Patrons," *Renaissance Studies* 15 (2001): 328–53.

[65] Terence O'Reilly, "Ignatius of Loyola and the Counter-Reformation: The Hagiographic Tradition," *Heythrop Journal* 31 (1990): 439–70, at p. 446.

of the order's goals and vision in Protestant Europe, the Jesuit general expressed his fundamental agreement with the use of political means to suppress religious dissent, including the censorship of books, the establishment of the Inquisition and the imposition of the death penalty in certain specific situations. Loyola himself, however, was not a polemicist and never debated Protestant beliefs in his writings, nor did he generally refer to Luther or other reformers: "[h]is gifts were not those of an academic theologian or a publicist, but of a pastor, and he preferred the simple affirmation of his beliefs to defending them in disputation".[66] Rather, he advised the Jesuits to use private conversations as a form of persuasive argumentation, as well as preaching on Catholic doctrines, administration of the sacraments and, above all, the example of Christian lives.

Through the widespread deployment of these practices, the Jesuits became a bulwark of orthodox Catholicism throughout Europe. Because of the order's seeming success in stemming the tide of Protestantism, some of Loyola's earliest biographers (such as Pedro Ribadeneira) represented the first Jesuit general as a soldier of the Church, leading its victorious armies against Luther, the Anti-Christ.[67] Similarly, Jerónimo Nadal, one of the first ten Jesuits, depicted him as completely consumed by the battle against the Lutherans. In these early accounts of Loyola's life, the general is described in the exalted discourse of hagiography as a "reinforcement" sent by God to defeat the forces of evil led by Luther. While Loyola did work to contain and offset the disintegrating effect of the Christian schism, as O'Reilly and others have established, his formative years were far removed from the late Counter-Reformation world in which his Jesuit associates wrote. Later, 18th- and 19th-century German Protestant historians such as Leopold von Ranke took up the same military imagery in detailed comparisons of the lives and personalities of Loyola and Luther.[68] Through this constant militarization of spirituality, Ignatius assumed

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[66] O'Reilly, p. 447.

[67] According to Ribadeneira, "when Martin Luther came out of hell like an infernal monster…at the same time God our Lord sent to the aid of his Church another man and captain, contrary to Luther in everything, so that with his invincible spirit and powerful divine arms he might valiantly resist them and fight the battles of the Lord…" (cited in O'Reilly, "Ignatius of Loyola and the Counter Reformation," p. 465, n. 12).

[68] See Leopold von Ranke, *The History of the Popes during the Last Four Centuries*, vol. 1 (London, 1908), pp. 145–53.

the identity of a religious warrior divinely selected to overthrow the devil's minions. It is this identity more than any other which has prevailed in the popular imagination. Given that in Loyola's lifetime and later the Jesuits had to defend themselves from accusations of heresy, this characterization is more than a little exaggerated.

Ignatius the Narrator

Although Ignatius never actually wrote an autobiographical account of his life, at the urging of his Jesuit associates, he did narrate a version of his post-conversion experiences to a hand-picked scribe, Luís Gonçalves da Câmara. He listened to the general's narration, wrote it down immediately afterward, and then presented his written version to another scribe for final copying. As mentioned previously, the Jesuit founder chooses to refer to himself only as "the pilgrim", and the third-person narration further serves to create an emotional distance between reader and subject. Not surprisingly, the story is full of movement, both physical and spiritual, as Loyola proceeds on his quest for sanctity. The language is direct and sparse, contributing to the effect of action rather than introspection. According to Da Câmara, "[t]he Father's manner of narrating is the same he uses in everything else; he does it with such clarity that the whole past is made present to the listener".[69] Even experiences of greatest emotional and spiritual impact, such as the vision at Storta, are presented in the most condensed version possible, with little or no detail. Similarly, his encounters with the Inquisition as well as the politics of founding the Society of Jesus are dealt with concisely and seemingly without emotion. In 11 chapters of varying length, Loyola reconstructs his life as a man with a mission: that of working for God's glory by bringing more souls to his love. Within this overarching mission, the founding of the Jesuits is pivotal. Yet curiously, *The Pilgrim's Story* ends before this occurs. In fact, Loyola's narrative has no real ending. Rather, the general announces that he will stop and states: "As for the rest, Master Nadal can tell you about that."[70] At the very end of the narrative, Da Câmara enters to mention his unsuccessful attempts to acquire the general's personal notes regarding the Jesuit *Constitutions.* While Loyola's refusal to

[69] Tylenda, p. 4.
[70] Tylenda, p. 119.

provide his scribe with these documents could well be attributed to a desire for privacy, the founder may also have been aware of their potentially dangerous implications for an order which continued to be viewed by many with mistrust, and by some with overt hostility. It is clear throughout the narrative of his life that Loyola has weighed his words carefully, choosing to err on the side of paucity rather than abundance. Boyle reads the text as "epideictic", yet another example of the self-effacement which is part of Loyola's determination to avoid vainglory and focus on God's workings in him.[71] The final effect is one of directness, fundamental truthfulness and simplicity, all of which contribute to an image of the saint as a relatively uncomplicated and straightforward person. And yet the reader must conclude that a great deal was being suppressed, whether by Loyola himself or his scribe Da Câmara.

Conclusion

The many contradictions which appear throughout Loyola's varied career—from soldier / courtier, to convert / mystic / pilgrim, to founder / administrator—reflect his multifaceted talents, his unique psychology and his perception of his life as mutable and subject to divine intervention. In addition, despite his own belief and assertions that the tremendous changes in his life reflect the will of God rather than his own, it is clear that Ignatius did exercise a great deal of control over his own ideas and actions as well as those of members of the Society of Jesus. Although he describes himself as experiencing many of the "irrational" or ineffable experiences of mysticism such as apparitions and inner voices, he was primarily a goal-directed individual who, in the strongly religious culture of his time, pursued his own vision of a holy life in service to God and humanity. While this vision obliged him to reduce the significance of his own needs and desires, it is apparent that throughout the pilgrimage of his life (briefly outlined here), his strong sense of self remained an integral part of his identity. According to Meissner, this sense is most evident in Ignatius's intense identification with Christ: "[i]t answered his narcissistic needs most effectively—to be like Christ would be to fulfill his most ardent wishes

[71] Boyle defines epideictic rhetoric as "rhetoric *from* the self *about* God" (p. 1).

to be singled out as one of God's heroes, one of God's chosen saints."[72] Through this strong identification and an equally strong will to act upon it, Loyola was able to merge his personal goals of achievement and heroism with those of the larger culture of his time (namely that of militant Catholicism). In so doing, he created a model of spiritual practice and religious life which has survived its creator by over four and a half centuries.

[72] Meissner, p. 399.

CECILIA DEL NACIMIENTO, SECOND-GENERATION MYSTIC OF THE CARMELITE REFORM

Evelyn Toft

Recent scholarship explores the spiritual and mystical writings of many Hispanic women in and out of convent communities in early modern Spain and its colonies in the Americas.[1] Cecilia del Nacimiento stands out from these many women who produced spiritual and mystical texts. A Discalced Carmelite of the early 17th century, Cecilia expertly articulates a high level of mystical experience. An accomplished poet and prose writer, her work demonstrates that the legacy of both Discalced Carmelite founders, Santa Teresa de Jesús and San Juan de la Cruz, flourished in the vibrant spiritual and intellectual convent culture of the second generation of Discalced Carmelite women.

The Discalced Carmelite scholar Emeterio de Jesús María asserted that Cecilia explained "with the mastery of a doctor, the most delicate, difficult and profound points of Mystical Theology."[2] Arenal and Schlau note Cecilia's ability to describe mystical experience more clearly and comprehensively than most of the male theologians of her time.[3] E. Allison Peers finds her to have had a "remarkable" grasp of

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[1] See, for example, these general studies: Electa Arenal and Stacey Schlau, *Untold Sisters: Hispanic Nuns in Their Own Works* (Albuquerque, 1989); Sonja Herpoel, *A la zaga de Santa Teresa: autobiografías por mandato* (Atlanta, 1999); Ronald E. Surtz, *Writing Women in Late Medieval and Early Modern Spain: The Mothers of Saint Teresa of Avila* (Philadelphia, 1995); and Lisa Vollendorf, *The Lives of Women: A New History of Inquisitional Spain* (Nashville, 2005). Studies on specific women authors include: Mary E. Giles, *The Book of Prayer of Sor María de Santo Domingo: A Study and Translation* (Albany, 1990); Stacey Schlau, *Viva al siglo, muerta al mundo: Selected Works / Obras escogidas by / de María de San Alberto* (New Orleans, 1998); and Ronald E. Surtz, *The Guitar of God: Gender, Power, and Authority in the Visionary World of Mother Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)* (Philadelphia, 1990). Two important studies on Teresa de Jesús and gender are Gillian T. W. Ahlgren, *Teresa de Ávila and the Politics of Sanctity* (Ithaca, 1996) and Alison Weber, *Teresa of Avila and the Rhetoric of Femininity* (Princeton, 1990).

[2] "con maestría doctoral los puntos más delicados, difíciles y profundos de la Teología Mística" (Emeterio de Jesús María, "La Madre Cecilia del Nacimiento," *El Monte Carmelo* 47 [1946]: 107–305, at p. 154).

[3] Arenal and Schlau, *Untold Sisters*, pp. 137, 143.

her subject "for a woman in seventeenth-century Spain."[4] Santa Teresa inspired Cecilia's poetry and her accounts of mystical experiences, while San Juan's influence is evident in her poems and unmistakable in her mystical treatises.

Cecilia del Nacimiento and her Times

Cecilia was born in 1570. She entered the Discalced Carmelite convent of Valladolid in 1587 with her older sister María, five years after the death of Santa Teresa and four years before the death of San Juan.[5] Cecilia's mother taught her literature, grammar, philosophy, rhetoric and Sacred Scripture with her brothers and sister, María.[6] Although their educational experiences were not common for women of late 16th- and early 17th-century Spain, Lisa Vollendorf cites Cecilia's and María's education at home with their mother as an example of women's efforts to educate girls and women at that time.[7]

Cecilia and María worked in close collaboration in the cloister.[8] Their mutual support fostered their development as contemplatives and their achievements as writers and leaders in their cloistered community.[9] That support was critical in a Counter-Reformation Spain hostile to women's contemplative experience and to theological writings authored by women. Nonetheless, cloistered women produced thousands of texts, principally religious poetry, spiritual biographies, and accounts of spiritual experience.[10] Santa Teresa stipulated in her rules that her nuns should "write, sing, and produce plays."[11] Within the protective walls of the convent in Valladolid, Cecilia and María produced an impressive body of work in prose and poetry, thereby

[4] E. Allison Peers, *Studies of the Spanish Mystics* (London, 1960), 3: 68.
[5] José María Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas de Cecilia del Nacimiento* (Madrid, 1971), p. 7.
[6] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, pp. 35–36.
[7] Lisa Vollendorf, *The Lives of Women: A New History of Inquisitional Spain* (Nashville, 2005), p. 175.
[8] Electa Arenal and Stacey Schlau, "Leyendo yo y escribiendo ella: The Convent as Intellectual Community," *Journal of Hispanic Philology* 13.3 (1990): 214–29, at p. 223.
[9] The bond between them is apparent in a vision that came to María in which she saw the arms of Jesus embrace both sisters together. See Stacey Schlau, *Viva al siglo, muerta al mundo* (New Orleans, 1998), p. 21.
[10] Vollendorf, *The Lives of Women*, pp. 93–95.
[11] Schlau, *Viva al siglo*, p. 21.

serving as role models to other women in the cloister. They also collaborated to produce a collection of poetry written by the nuns of their convent.[12]

The legacy of Santa Teresa as mystic, leader, teacher and writer inspired her spiritual daughters to do as she did. She was the only woman whose theological texts were published in Counter-Reformation Spain.[13] Not only did Santa Teresa write about theological topics, she exercised considerable religious authority as the founder of the Discalced Carmelites. During Cecilia's lifetime, Santa Teresa went from "a controversial and suspect figure" to "a sacrosanct object of devotion and national celebration."[14] Santa Teresa's beatification and canonization provided protection for the cultivation of contemplative experience and the production of religious texts among women.[15]

In spite of the nurturing environment within the cloister, religious authorities outside its walls generally did not support women as writers, teachers and gifted contemplatives. The very texts nuns produced within the cloister to encourage and instruct each other also brought the scrutiny of male clerical officials seeking to control women's spirituality and limit their authority. Cecilia and María both turned over their written work to Alonso de Jesús María, General of the Discalced Carmelite Order, only for it to be confiscated.[16] Silverio observes that Alonso and many other Discalced Carmelite friars did not think it appropriate for nuns to write about mystical experience.[17] Indeed, some objected to the circulation of Santa Teresa's writing. Domingo Báñez, Saint Teresa's Dominican spiritual advisor, threatened to burn the original manuscript of her *Vida* because he believed that women's writing should not be in circulation.[18]

Cecilia's accomplishments as a writer and a mystic are all the more impressive given the fact that women were disadvantaged in so many ways. When Peers gives her a backhanded compliment by recognizing that she has a deep understanding of mysticism "for a woman

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[12] Schlau, *Viva al siglo*, p. 27.
[13] Ahlgren, *Teresa of Avila and the Politics of Sanctity*, p. 18.
[14] Arenal and Schlau, *Untold Sisters*, p. 138.
[15] Arenal and Schlau, *Untold Sisters*, p. 138.
[16] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 320.
[17] Silverio de Santa Teresa, *Historia del Carmen Descalzo en España, Portugal y América* (Burgos, 1940), 9: 889.
[18] Schlau, *Viva al siglo*, p. 138.

in seventeenth-century Spain",[19] he seems to acknowledge that Cecilia was an accomplished writer on spirituality even though she had not benefited from formal academic training in theology. However, unlike many women of her day, including Santa Teresa de Jesús, she could access the same texts as did male clerics and academics. Cecilia was proficient in Greek and Latin, having studied them with her mother.[20] Although books on scripture and spirituality written in the vernacular had been banned since 1559, Cecilia could read books on mystical theology written in Latin, and could therefore access their doctrine and specialized vocabulary. She was in a position to interpret her mystical experience in light of the teaching of texts that had come to be under almost complete clerical control.[21] Thus she was able to circumvent the obstacles to expression faced by most women of her time. This training, along with support from her family and spiritual director, protected her when clerics who opposed the production of theological and mystical texts by women scrutinized her work.

Cecilia did face suspicion due to her mystical experience and her writings. In addition to her sister's support, her brother Antonio Sobrino (1556–1622) proved to be an important and well-placed ally. A preacher at the court of King Phillip III, he had served King Phillip II before joining the Franciscans.[22] When Cecilia was ordered to produce an account of her spiritual experiences, resulting in her *Primera relación de mercedes*, she made use of their correspondence because he had affirmed the authenticity of her experiences in his letters to her. His reputation for sanctity had led his order to seek his beatification, thus giving greater weight to his glowing assessment of both her mystical experience and her ability to express that experience in words. A more thorough discussion of his role in her life will follow.

Cecilia's ties to San Juan's legacy also may have raised doubts about her among the Discalced Carmelite leadership. When Tomás de Jesús

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[19] Peers, *Studies of the Spanish Mystics*, 3: 68.

[20] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, pp. 35–36.

[21] Anyone interested in a life of prayer who could not read Latin was greatly disadvantaged in Counter-Reformation Spain. Once books on spirituality written in the vernacular were banned by the Inquisition, lay readers could not access texts and vocabulary that would allow them to describe their experience in orthodox terms. This situation impacted women especially, making them vulnerable to accusations of heresy if they described their prayer experiences with the wrong language. For a discussion of the problems confronting women because of censorship, see Ahlgren, *Teresa of Avila*, pp. 15–21.

[22] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 446.

(Cecilia's spiritual director for many years) fell out of favor with them, Cecilia was removed from the priorship at Calahorra, ordered to surrender her writings and not to discuss her spiritual life with anyone.[23] Tomás de Jesús advocated the mysticism of San Juan and edited the first Spanish edition of his works at a time when the Discalced Carmelite leadership sought to downplay San Juan's legacy.[24] The leadership privileged Agustín Antolínez's early 17th-century commentary on San Juan's "Cántico espiritual" over that of San Juan himself, although Antolínez's text hardly referred to the mystical experience characteristic of San Juan's spirituality.[25] Instead, it favored the more activist spirituality characteristic of the Counter Reformation, which discouraged mystical experience as too passive and furthermore associated with heresy.

Unlike many Discalced Carmelite friars and much of the Counter-Reformation church, San Juan de la Cruz affirmed the spiritual aspirations of women. His prose commentaries, when not expressly written for women, were all composed in response to their interest.[26] San Juan defended the interests of Discalced Carmelite women before their governing board at the end of his life.[27] The campaign mounted by the leadership of the Discalced Carmelite friars to discredit San Juan in his last months targeted nuns who were close to him in the hopes of finding incriminating documents.[28] Cecilia's work directly reflects his legacy.

An Overview of Cecilia's Writings

In addition to a number of essays and two treatises on "Liras de la transformación del alma en Dios", Cecilia wrote almost 100 poems. Some sonnets complain about her sufferings for love, while others

[23] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, pp. 9–10.

[24] *Vida y obras de San Juan de la Cruz* [Vida por Crisógono de Jesús], ed. Matías del Niño Jesús and Lucinio Ruano (Madrid, 1972), p. 697.

[25] Evelyn Toft, "A Counter Reformation Commentary on the 'Cántico espiritual': Agustín Antolínez's *Amores de Dios y el alma*," *Studia mystica* 18 (1997): 144–63, at pp. 151, 162.

[26] *Vida y obras de San Juan de la Cruz*, pp. 250–51.

[27] *Vida y obras de San Juan de la Cruz*, pp. 306–11; and Richard P. Hardy, *Search for Nothing: The Life of John of the Cross* (New York, 1982), p. 103.

[28] *Vida y obras de San Juan de la Cruz*, pp. 320–22; and Hardy, *Search for Nothing*, pp. 105–06.

celebrate the joys of intimacy with the Divine Spouse. She also wrote poetry in honor of Santa Teresa.[29] Many of her poems are occasional verse, written to be used in the celebrations of her community.

Cecilia's writing activity occurred in two different periods of her life, separated by almost 30 years.[30] To the earlier period belong the first of her two commentaries on "Liras de la transformación del alma en Dios" (1603). In this earlier period Cecilia also wrote a short treatise, *Tratado de la unión del alma en Dios* (1602), which describes in great detail the progressive transformation of the human partner into divine lover through the experience of union with God.[31]

Toward the end of her life (1629–43), in addition to the second commentary on "Liras de transformación del alma en Dios" (also titled *Tratado de la transformación del alma en Dios* [1631]), Cecilia wrote two accounts of spiritual favors, *Primera relación de mercedes* (1629) and *Segunda relación de mercedes* (1633). *Primera relación* recounts different kinds of spiritual experiences, including foreknowledge of events within her order, special insight into passages of Sacred Scripture, and noteworthy contemplative experiences. *Segunda relación de mercedes*, much like *Primera relación*, reports visions and profound insights into Scripture and describes deep experiences of contemplation.

Cecilia also wrote essays on two passages from the Song of Songs: "My beloved to me, and I to him" (Song of Songs 2:16) in 1634 and "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and the harts of the field, that you stir not up nor awake my beloved, till she please" in 1637 (Song of Songs 3:5).[32] The bridal mysticism found in San Juan's "Cántico espiritual" dominates these two commentaries.

Cecilia's Poetry about Santa Teresa

Cecilia played an important role in the campaign for Santa Teresa's beatification and canonization. She emulated her spiritual mother in her embrace of contemplative prayer, mystical experience, and the

[29] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, pp. 597, 611, 691, 692, 694, 708, and 714.
[30] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 30.
[31] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, pp. 272–88.
[32] Biblical quotations are from the Douay version (*The Holy Bible, Translated from the Latin Vulgate*, ed. Richard Challoner [New York, 1941]).

creation of written texts. Arenal and Schlau note three ways in which Santa Teresa influenced her spiritual daughters: "she made it possible for a few talented women to make a place in history"; she paved the way for women to write; and her example inspired poetry that celebrated, defended and justified her achievements.[33] Santa Teresa's canonization and the acceptance of her writings by church authorities gave Cecilia, her sister María, and other women tacit permission to write as well. Arenal and Schlau observe that the poetry written by Cecilia and her sister María about Santa Teresa focuses on her gender as well as qualities usually associated with men.[34]

In "Liras a Nuestra Santa Madre Teresa de Jesús", Cecilia praises Santa Teresa as a princess, daughter of the King of Heaven and spouse of Jesus the Prince. Cecilia enumerates her virtues, but notes that in the end only Santa Teresa's beloved can speak fully of her perfection and her many gifts.[35] In "De Jesús Teresa es", Cecilia suggests with a play on Santa Teresa's name that the love between Jesus and Santa Teresa is such that Jesus belongs to Santa Teresa as much as she belongs to him. She proclaims:

> He is happy and requited
> by his beloved Teresa,
> all in her is transformed
> and even the name attached to hers
> declares it.[36]

While these poems emphasize the special love between Santa Teresa and her Divine Spouse, other poems focus on virtues usually associated with men, such as courage and military leadership. As prevailing prejudices declared women to be weak and susceptible to all manner of moral and intellectual failings, if women were virtuous and strong it had to be due to their manliness.[37] Santa Teresa is a "patriarca". She is not only the moon, a symbol of the feminine, who guides the Discalced Carmelites; she is also clothed with Jesus, who is the Sun of

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[33] Arenal and Schlau, *Untold Sisters*, p. 138.
[34] Arenal and Schlau, *Untold Sisters*, pp. 138–39.
[35] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, pp. 611–12.
[36] "Está contento y pagado / de su querida Teresa, / todo en ella transformado, / y hasta en el nombre a su lado / según el nombre confiesa" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 695). All translations of Cecilia's texts are my own.
[37] Gillian T. W. Ahlgren, "Negotiating Sanctity: Holy Women in Sixteenth-Century Spain," *Church History* 64 (1995): 373–88, at pp. 380–83.

Justice.[38] In "De esas esferas divinas", Santa Teresa is the captain of the militia, who leads both men and women to victory in the battle against the forces of darkness. Jesus's arm smites the enemy through her acts of heroic valor:

> Full of divine knowledge
> of valor and fortitude,
> of grace and wisdom,
> of gentleness and patience,
> with a zeal for souls
> and with great prudence,
> she accomplished deeds so heroic
> that everyone can vouch for them.[39]

All give thanks to the divine source of such glory and grandeur as that bestowed on the universal heroine, Teresa.[40]

The impact of Santa Teresa's example on second-generation women of the Carmelite Reform is evident in the poetry Cecilia composed in her honor. Arenal and Schlau observe that many of the poems are "ardent defenses, justifications, and explanations of a controversial woman's life work."[41] By claiming traditionally masculine virtues for Santa Teresa, Cecilia challenges the limitations on women sanctioned by the church and society of her time. Santa Teresa paved the way for the women who came after her to aspire not only to enjoy the same intimate spousal relationship with Jesus, but to teach and inspire others as she did.

Cecilia's Mystical Texts and the Legacy of San Juan

Although José María Díaz Cerón, editor of her *Obras completas* and author of a study of her mysticism, insists that San Juan's writings did not influence Cecilia, many scholars claim otherwise.[42] Emeterio de Jesús María found that many Discalced Carmelite scholars encoun-

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[38] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 691.

[39] "Llena de ciencia divina / de valor y fortaleza, / de gracia y sabiduría, / de mansedumbre y paciencia, / con el celo de las almas / y con su mucha prudencia / hizo obras tan heroicas / como todo el mundo muestra" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 693).

[40] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 694.

[41] Arenal and Schlau, *Untold Sisters*, p. 138. Arenal and Schlau give examples of how María de San Alberto depicted Santa Teresa in *Untold Sisters*, pp. 139–41. Cecilia and María used many of the same themes in their poetry about Santa Teresa.

[42] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 734.

tered San Juan's influence in Cecilia's texts.[43] Silverio de Santa Teresa finds her writings to be permeated with his spirit.[44] Gerardo de San Juan de la Cruz even included Cecilia's first *Tratado de la transformación del alma en Dios* in his edition of San Juan's complete works because of its marked similarity with his expository method and teaching.[45] E. Allison Peers observes that there is an "uncanny similarity" between Cecilia's texts and those of San Juan.[46] Among literary scholars, Luce López-Baralt also acknowledges that Cecilia's "Liras de la transformación del alma en Dios" clearly evoke the *liras* of San Juan's "Noche oscura".[47]

Cecilia's writings suggest that San Juan's teaching flourished among Discalced Carmelite women in the early 17th century. Cecilia quotes him directly in *Segunda relación de mercedes*[48] and in her essay on the passage from the Song of Songs, "My beloved to me, and I to him" (Song of Songs 2:16).[49] Although the first edition of San Juan's works was not published until 1618 by her confessor Tomás de Jesús, manuscript copies of his prose commentaries dating from the 16th century are still in the possession of the Carmelite convent of Valladolid.[50]

"Liras de la transformación del alma en Dios" and San Juan's "Noche oscura"

"Liras de la transformación del alma en Dios"[51] clearly echoes San Juan's poem, "Noche oscura."[52] When Cecilia does not directly borrow his language, she conveys a similar notion in her own words. Both

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[43] Emeterio de Jesús María, "La Madre Cecilia del Nacimiento," pp. 155–58.
[44] Silverio de Santa Teresa, *Historia del Carmen Descalzo*, p. 904.
[45] Gerardo de San Juan de la Cruz, *Obras del místico doctor, San Juan de la Cruz* (Toledo, 1914), 3: 344.
[46] Peers, *Studies of the Spanish Mystics*, 3: 3.
[47] Luce López-Baralt, *San Juan de la Cruz y el Islam* (Mexico City, 1985), p. 105.
[48] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, pp. 332, 334.
[49] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 346.
[50] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 728.
[51] The stanza number for quotations from the "Liras" and "Noche oscura" will be given in the body of the essay. The text of the "Liras" can be found in Díaz Cerón, *Obras completas*, pp. 54–61. Readers can find the text of "Noche oscura" in any edition of San Juan's writings.
[52] A fuller discussion of this topic can be found in Evelyn Toft, "Cecilia del Nacimiento's 'Liras' and *Tratado de la transformación del alma en Dios*," *Carmelus* 46 (1999): 32–47.

poems follow the same narrative. The beloved leaves (ascends), searching for her Lover in darkness, guided only by the love burning in her heart. She finds Him and unites with Him in solitude and security, caressed by gentle breezes. She surrenders completely and is transformed into Him.

The similarities between the two poems are striking. While Cecilia's poem speaks of a "dark cloud" in which the beloved is left "with nothing else in sight",[53] San Juan's refers to a "dark night" in which the speaker is left unseen (stanza 1).[54] In Cecilia's poem the soul "is inflamed by love" (stanza 2),[55] while in San Juan's poem the soul is "fired with love's urgent longings" (stanza 1).[56]

The narrator of Cecilia's poem finds "her powers overwhelmed" (stanza 6) when the soul encounters her Lover.[57] Union with the Divine Lover in "Noche oscura" also suspends the senses (stanza 7). In both poems the union comes in the wake of the beloved's ascent by means of a secret ladder.[58] In both poems the beloved ascends in security (Cecilia, stanza 7; San Juan, stanza 2). In both poems the beloved experiences the Divine Lover while inwardly still (Cecilia, stanza 8; San Juan, stanzas 1, 2).

Cecilia makes two references to a breeze in her description of the encounter of the soul with the Divine Lover: "a very gentle breeze, / that caresses sweetly all that is within" (stanza 9) and "the gentle waves of that serene breeze come" (stanza 14).[59] San Juan's poetic persona encounters her Lover while feeling "a breeze from the fanning cedars" (stanza 6).[60] She also feels "the breeze…from the turret" while enjoying His attentions (stanza 7).[61]

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[53] "niebla oscura…sin vista de otra cosa" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 54).

[54] "noche oscura…sin ser notada" The original Spanish version and the English translation of San Juan's "Noche oscura" are taken from the Kavanaugh and Rodriguez translation in *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, rev. ed. (Washington, D.C., 1991), pp. 50–52.

[55] "de amor está inflamada" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 54).

[56] "en amores inflamada" (Kavanaugh and Rodriguez, eds, *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, p. 50).

[57] "las potencias suspendidas" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 56).

[58] "por escalera" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 56); "por secreta escala" (Kavanaugh and Rodriguez, eds, *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, p. 51).

[59] "mueve un aire muy blando / que todo lo interior va regalando" and "vienen las blandas olas de aqueste aire sereno" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, pp. 56, 60).

[60] "el ventalle de cedros aire daba" (Kavanaugh and Rodriguez, eds, *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, p. 51).

[61] "El aire de la almena" (Kavanaugh and Rodriguez, eds, *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, p. 51).

In both poems the beloved sets out urgently in search of the Divine Lover (Cecilia, stanza 10; San Juan, stanza 1). In "Liras", love directs the soul to the Divine Spouse: "Love alone guides her on her way, /…unerringly she walks on" (stanza 11).[62] San Juan's poetic persona proceeds "[i]n darkness and secure" (stanza 2) and searches "with no other light or guide / than the one that burned in my heart" (stanza 3).[63]

Both poets refer to the nocturnal union with the Divine Lover that transforms the beloved into her Lover. As a result of the unitive experience, the beloved in Cecilia's poem is "completely forgetful of herself" (stanza 15).[64] San Juan's phrase suggests a similar experience. The beloved finds all her senses suspended (stanza 7).[65]

In Cecilia's "Liras", because the soul has been "robada" or ravaged, she is "completely forgetful of herself" (stanza 15). In "Noche oscura" the poetic persona declares that she lost herself, forgot herself: "I abandoned and forgot myself /…leaving my cares / forgotten among the lilies" (stanza 8).[66] The surrender of self in the encounter is explicit in the last lines of Cecilia's poem: "when she is overcome, / she dissolves and is transformed in Him" (stanza 16).[67] These lines also recall the declaration of "Noche oscura" that "amada en el amado [está] transformada," the beloved is transformed into her Lover (stanza 5).

Although the two poems are very similar, there are important differences. Cecilia's poem is written as a third-person narrative, while San Juan's is written in the first person. The use of the third person in Cecilia's poem creates distance between the event narrated and the beloved who is the subject of the experience. Cecilia creates further distance through the explanatory passages and references to doctrine that break up the lyricism of the poem. San Juan communicates greater immediacy by using the first person and by sustaining an unbroken lyricism.

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[62] "El amor la encamina…sin otra doctrina, camina muy segura" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 58).

[63] "A escuras y segura"; "sin otra luz y guía, / sino la que en el corazón ardía" (Kavanaugh and Rodriguez, eds, *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, p. 51).

[64] "de sí toda enajenada" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 60).

[65] "todos mis sentidos suspendía" (Kavanaugh and Rodriguez, eds, *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, p. 51).

[66] "olvidéme…dejéme, / dejando mi cuidado / entre las azucenas olvidado" (Kavanaugh and Rodriguez, eds, *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, p. 52).

[67] "con darse por vencida / pierde su ser y en El es convertida" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 60).

Cecilia breaks the poem's narrative flow to interpret the experience. She identifies the dark cloud to be a divine light (stanza 1). She remarks that the soul sees nothing because knowledge has been both transcended and attained (stanza 2).[68] The soul ascends to its secret center, its "highest heaven" (stanza 4).[69] Cecilia explains that the soul is still because her understanding is blind, her passions are in check, and her faculties are suspended (stanza 6).[70] She also explains that Christ's mysteries provide the path by which the beloved ascends to find the Divine Spouse (stanza 7). The beloved enjoys "the Eternal Word" whose "Holy Spirit breathes / a gentle breeze that refreshes her soul" (stanza 9).[71] San Juan does not identify the "Amado" for whom the "amada" searches. Cecilia notes that love is the only principle that guides the soul in her search for God's beauty (stanza 11). Understanding and memory are not involved (stanza 12). Her brother Antonio composed a preliminary stanza for the "Liras". It states specifically that the "Liras" in no way suggest that a creature can lose its creaturely status when united and transformed in God (stanza 17), a doctrinal statement designed to insure that the mystical experience narrated in the poem is not misconstrued as unorthodox.[72]

Cecilia incorporates important concepts from San Juan's writings into the body of her poem. Cecilia observes that the dark cloud experienced by the beloved is divine light (stanza 1), a central theme of Book 2 of the *Subida del Monte Carmelo*. She echoes his teaching on faith, which maintains that faith blinds the intellect. It is the dark night and the dark cloud of faith that give transcendent knowledge.[73] Cecilia's reference to the suspension of the faculties in stanza 6 recalls San Juan's discussion in the *Subida* that faith, hope and charity empty and darken the understanding, memory and will so that the soul can be united with God.[74] Cecilia's reference to the soul's secret center, its inner heaven (stanza 4), reflects San Juan's call to hide within one's

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[68] "trascendida y alcanzada" (Díaz Cerón, *Obras completas*, p. 54).
[69] "empíreo Cielo" (Díaz Cerón, *Obras completas*, p. 54).
[70] "su entender ya ciego, / las pasiones rendidas, /…las potencias suspendidas" (Díaz Cerón, *Obras completas*, p. 56).
[71] "el Verbo Eterno el alma está gozando, / su espíritu divino mueve un aire muy blando / que todo lo interior va regalando" (Díaz Cerón, *Obras completas*, p. 56).
[72] Díaz Cerón, *Obras completas*, p. 62.
[73] *Subida del Monte Carmelo*, Book 2, ch. 3, paragraphs 4–5.
[74] *Subida*, Book 2, ch. 6, paragraph 6.

deepest center to find the dwelling place of the Divine Spouse.[75] When Cecilia asserts that love alone guides the beloved to her Divine Mate, she calls to mind San Juan's focus on love's central role in the movement of the soul toward God. San Juan devotes several chapters in Book 2 of *Noche oscura* to the role of love in uniting the human partner with God.[76]

Cecilia wrote many other poems echoing the bridal mysticism characteristic of both Santa Teresa and San Juan. Several explore the contemplative ascent to God in terms of the love story of the beloved and the Divine Lover. The contemplative ascent to God begins with a sense of God's absence and accompanying feelings of despair, loneliness and frustration as found in "¿De qué me sirve, triste…?".[77] In her sonnet "Piadosa fuerza, vencimiento blando" she describes the experience of the Divine Lover's presence in somewhat abstract terms.[78] The experience evolves into the encounter of two individuals in "Cuando os miro y me miráis".[79] However, it is in the "Liras" where the union of the beloved and the Divine Lover is consummated. It is on these "Liras" that Cecilia wrote two prose commentaries, one in 1603 and the other in 1631.[80]

Tratado de la tranformación del alma en Dios and San Juan's Prose Commentaries

Tratado de la transformación del alma en Dios provides an extended commentary on the "Liras". Cecilia comments on her poem stanza by stanza and verse by verse, as did San Juan in commenting on his poems. Peers asserts that the *Tratado* is nearer to San Juan's writing in form and substance than any other known text.[81] Cecilia's commentary reminds Peers of San Juan's commentary on the "Cántico spiritual" rather than the commentary on "Noche oscura" (otherwise known as *Subida del Monte Carmelo*).[82] Cecilia's *Tratado* reiterates many themes

[75] *Cántico espiritual*, stanza 1, paragraphs 3–12.
[76] *Noche oscura*, Book 2, chapters 11–20.
[77] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 587.
[78] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 588.
[79] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 698.
[80] For a fuller discussion of Cecilia's bridal mysticism, see Evelyn Toft, "Joy in the Presence of the Bridegroom," *Studia mystica* 22 (2001): 83–96.
[81] Peers, *Studies of the Spanish Mystics*, 3: 67.
[82] Peers, *Studies of the Spanish Mystics*, 3: 68.

found in San Juan's commentaries, in language very reminiscent of his. Cecilia focuses almost exclusively on contemplative experience in the *Tratado*, as did San Juan in his commentaries *Cántico espiritual* and *Llama de amor viva*. However, as Peers points out, one is not left with the impression that her work is merely derivative. Rather, the reader senses that she writes from direct personal knowledge and has a thorough grasp of her subject.[83]

Not surprisingly, given the dependence of Cecilia's "Liras" on San Juan's "Noche oscura", the themes of divine darkness and light are as central to Cecilia's discussion of spiritual development as they are to San Juan's. Cecilia's *Tratado* describes the basic features of contemplative experience. Once the person is emptied of all things, a divine darkness covers the profound abyss of the person's capacity.[84] Through this darkness the contemplative "receives communication from God's very self in her very substance."[85] For Cecilia, darkness is fundamental to contemplative experience: "There is no sight, only the enjoyment in darkness of the very One who is present, without knowing or understanding how."[86]

For these mystics, divine darkness is in reality divine light. Cecilia notes that it is experienced as darkness because it exceeds human capacity. Cecilia says: "Human understanding is blinded by the excess of divine light."[87] Similarly, San Juan explains: "And just as God is darkness to our intellect, so faith dazzles and blinds us."[88] Like her precursor San Juan, Cecilia insists on the necessity of proceeding in prayer by the darkness of faith if contemplative experience is to dawn.[89]

Both San Juan and Cecilia understand contemplation to be the infusion of God's being into the human person. In contemplation, "[t]he

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[83] Peers, *Studies of the Spanish Mystics*, 3: 68–69.

[84] "la cubre una tiniebla divina los profundos abismos de su capacidad, en la inmensidad de Dios" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 83).

[85] "recibe comunicación del mismo Dios en su misma sustancia" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 84).

[86] "no hay ver, sino gozar en oscuro al mismo que tiene consigo, sin saber ni entender cómo" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 112).

[87] "es por el exceso de la luz divina, que ciega el entendimiento humano" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 129).

[88] "Como Dios es tiniebla para nuestro entendimiento, así ella también ciega y deslumbra nuestro entendimiento" (*Subida*, Book 2, ch. 9, paragraph 1).

[89] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, pp. 124, 159; *Subida*, Book 2, ch. 4, paragraph 2.

substance of the secrets is God himself."[90] Cecilia defines it as "communication of God's self"[91] which is "above all particular forms of knowledge."[92] She calls it "the very substance of God."[93]

Cecilia observes that in contemplative prayer, "to lose oneself is to gain oneself."[94] God drowns the beloved in divine immensity.[95] She notes that "the more one unites with this divine death and divine life, the greater the power with which one has the things of the Lord and the greater the force with which one lives in Him."[96] Similarly, the beloved in San Juan's *Cántico espiritual* declares: "You will say that I am lost; that, stricken by love, I lost myself, and was found."[97] For Cecilia, contemplatives let go within the immensity of God[98] and discover "this immense place that they have within themselves and within Him."[99] San Juan notes that the contemplative arrives at "this understanding and experience that the divinity is as immense as to surpass complete understanding."[100]

Through the direct encounter with the purity and simplicity of God's being, God communicates "great riches, divine treasures and secrets, while the soul is reduced to nothing."[101] Like San Juan before her, Cecilia describes spiritual development as a progressively greater participation in God's being. Cecilia understands the contemplative's

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[90] "La cual sustancia de los secretos es el mismo Dios" (*Cántico espiritual*, stanza 1, paragraph 10; Kavanaugh and Rodriguez, eds, *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, p. 481).

[91] "comunicación del mismo Dios" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 84).

[92] "sobre toda inteligencia y noticia particular" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 85).

[93] "es de la misma sustancia de Dios" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 85).

[94] "el perderse es ganarse" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 133).

[95] "la ahoga en la inmensidad de su Ser" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 100).

[96] "cuanto más se sume en esta muerte y vida divina, tanto con mayor fuerza tiene las cosas de este Señor y vive en El" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 139).

[97] "Diréis que me he perdido; que, andando enamorada, me hice perdidiza, y fui ganada" (*Cántico espiritual*, stanza 29; Kavanaugh and Rodriguez, eds, *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, p. 588).

[98] "soltarse en la inmensidad de Dios" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 117).

[99] "este lugar inmenso que tienen en sí mismos y en El mismo" (Díaz Cerón, *Obras completas*, p. 120).

[100] "aquel entender y sentir ser tan inmensa la Divinidad…no se puede entender acabadamente" (*Cántico espiritual*, stanza 7, paragraph 9; Kavanaugh and Rodriguez, eds, *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, p. 502).

[101] "inmensas riquezas, tesoros y secretos divinos, estando el alma vuelta y reducida en nada" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 128).

transformation in God to come from a divine fire that consumes the soul and infuses it with divine properties.[102] She observes:

> With divine glory God beautifies her, with divine beauty God purifies her, through polishing God brightens her. She glows with God's clarity, and radiates divine rays. God enlightens her with his light; makes her true in his truth; makes her full of love in his love. God sanctifies her in his holiness and makes her full of grace. God makes her God through participation and union with Divinity. Thus is fulfilled well the Psalm which says: "You are gods and children of the Most High" (Psalm 82:6).[103]

According to San Juan, contemplative prayer fills the beloved with divine virtue. It makes her "engrandecida, honrada y hermoseada." It clothes her with delight and bathes her in inestimable glory.[104] San Juan's *Llama de amor viva* explores at great length the transformation of the human partner into the divine fire of God's love. God's touch communicates God's qualities: "fortitude, wisdom, love, beauty, grace, goodness."[105]

Cecilia understands spiritual development in terms of a progressive deification, as does San Juan. When Cecilia describes the deification of the soul in terms of spiritual marriage in her discussion of stanzas 13 through 16 of the "Liras", she echoes San Juan's depictions of spiritual marriage in the *Cántico espiritual*. The transformation of the beloved required for spiritual marriage fills Cecilia with awe:

> Oh divine union and divine marriage that thus raises a created nature to join it in this sublime way in a divine union with uncreated nature, a created spirit with the uncreated spirit of God, making them into the very same thing! [106]

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[102] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 85.

[103] "Con su gloria la hermosea, con su hermosura la purifica, con su limpieza la clarifica y resplandece con su claridad rayos y resplandores divinos; la alumbra con su luz, la hace verdadera en su verdad, hácela toda amor en su amor, la santifica en su santidad y hace graciosa en su gracia divina, hácela Dios por la participación y unión con su Deidad, y se cumple bien lo del Salmo que dice: 'Son dioses e hijos del Altísimo'" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 92).

[104] *Cántico espiritual*, verse 33, paragraph 7.

[105] "fortaleza, sabiduría y amor, hermosura, gracia y bondad" (*Llama de amor viva*, stanza 2, paragraph 21).

[106] "¡Oh divina unión y matrimonio divino que así levantas una naturaleza criada a juntarla por este modo altísimo de unión divina con la naturaleza increada, y al espíritu criado con el increado de Dios, haciendo de ambas una misma cosa!" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 161).

Similarly, San Juan notes that in spiritual marriage "the union wrought between the two natures and the communication of the divine to the human in this state is such that even though neither changes its being, both appear to be God."[107]

Cecilia also is careful to note that the beloved is transformed in God without losing her own nature.[108] The beloved enjoys the clearest communication of God's being possible in this life.[109] God swallows her and consumes her. God has completely stolen her; all her operations are divine.[110] San Juan also describes the beloved's actions as divine: "[i]n this state the soul cannot make acts because the Holy Spirit makes them all and moves it toward them."[111] Cecilia wonders at how God has raised up a creature to be transformed into her Creator while still remaining a creature. Finding herself to be nothingness swimming in the immensity of God's infinite Being, "she surrenders fully to the grandeur of her God."[112]

San Juan and Cecilia both place spiritual marriage in God's garden, an echo of the Song of Songs (5:1). Cecilia likens God's immensity to a meadow and God's attributes to the flowers that fill it. Eternity is a breeze, causing a delicate dizziness that gives the beloved a taste of eternal life.[113] Through this breeze the Holy Spirit makes the beloved lose all awareness of external things.[114] San Juan refers to the breeze that blows through the garden in "Noche oscura" (stanza 7). In the *Cántico espiritual*, the Divine Lover takes the beloved to His garden full of flowers to consummate the union.[115] The fruits and flowers of the garden signify the delights that God has waiting for her there.

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[107] "se hace tal junta de las dos naturalezas y tal comunicación de la divina a la humana, que, no mudando alguna de ellas su ser, cada una parece Dios" (*Cántico espiritual*, stanza 22, paragraph 5; Kavanaugh and Rodriguez, eds, *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, p. 561).

[108] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 171.

[109] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 159.

[110] "El traga y consume en sí al alma" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 167).

[111] "En este estado no puede el alma hacer actos; que el Espíritu Santo los hace todos y la mueve a ellos" (*Llama de amor viva*, stanza 1, paragraph 4).

[112] "se rinde del todo a la grandeza de su Dios" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 171).

[113] "Como una suavísima marea que suavemente anda por toda ella y la penetra con este gusto y sentir de vida divina y eterna" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 164).

[114] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 165.

[115] *Cántico espiritual*, stanza 22, paragraph 5.

In the *Tratado* Cecilia demonstrates command of her subject matter: the contemplative path of spiritual development from its beginnings to the fullness of spiritual marriage. While there is no doubt that San Juan's writings inspired her and served as a springboard for her own work, her sure grasp of the subject suggests abundant direct experience of what she narrates.

Primera and *Segunda relación de mercedes*

Cecilia provides an account of her relationship to God with great humility in two brief accounts of her spiritual experience. While not leaving aside completely the objective tone of her treatises, in *Primera relación de mercedes* and *Segunda relación de mercedes* Cecilia directly describes her own personal spiritual and mystical experiences.

She wrote both texts at the request of the leadership of the Discalced Carmelites. *Primera relación* (1629) recounts her own contemplative experience and quotes extensively from letters she received from her brother, Antonio Sobrino, for whose beatification process she gave testimony in 1627.[116] Cecilia recalls that she was attracted to a life of prayer even as a young child and that she and her sister, María, were blessed with many of the same graces.[117] As she recounts her visions, we see that in some she has premonitions of the future.[118] In one, she is assured that everyone in her family has been saved.[119] In another, she is assured that she is in a state of grace.[120] Nonetheless, she resists describing her contemplative experience: "There are so many graces and they are so divine and lofty that they cannot be expressed; the soul sees clearly within itself the hidden treasure in the field of God's immensity."[121]

The accounts of her contemplative experience suggest that her treatises describe her own experience. Cecilia exclaims: "The abyss of the soul is a wonderful thing, like a well without a bottom, which

[116] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, pp. 445–70.
[117] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, pp. 305, 319.
[118] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 303.
[119] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 319.
[120] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 307.
[121] "Son tantas las Mercedes y tan divinas y levantadas que no se sabe decir; ve el alma en sí claro el tesoro escondido en el campo de la inmensidad de Dios" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 298).

accommodates so many great things of God and God's very self."[122] She depicts a typical prayer experience as follows: "Prayer ordinarily consists of flights of the spirit in which the soul rises up in God and flies in God's immensity and enters more into Him, and when she wants to pray and petition, as faith is so lively, she finds in prayer what she seeks."[123] Cecilia refers to divine impulses that overtake her deep in her soul, bringing with them divinity and majesty.[124] She alludes to an unshakeable inner peace that dominates no matter what is happening in her life: "The soul rests and walks in a solitude that is not disturbed by exterior activities, which are great and taxing for a frail and sickly body."[125]

She breaks off her discussion of her own experiences to quote extensively from Antonio Sobrino's letters to her. In her brother she found a kindred spirit who supported and advised her. She consulted him about her contemplative experience and asked for his input on her analysis of it in her spiritual treatises. He affirms her experience in prayer: "All of the times that you discuss God's immensity and incomprehensibility and that there are no words for it, how well I understand you."[126] He observes that although he has studied theology of necessity because he is obliged to preach, he principally derives nourishment from his own contemplative experience.[127] He praises her for inspiring contemplative experience in him.[128]

Primera relación underscores the importance of family support for Cecilia's life and work. She could consult her brother on how to express herself so as not to run afoul of ecclesiastical authorities or the leadership of her own order. Her brother affirmed the authenticity of her experiences in his letters to her. He also approved of her analysis

[122] "Es cosa maravillosa el abismo del alma, como pozo sin suelo en donde caben tantas grandezas de Dios y El mismo" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 302).

[123] "La oración, muy de ordinario, son unos vuelos del espíritu con que se levanta en Dios y vuela en su inmensidad y entra más en El; y cuando quiere orar y pedir, como la fe está tan viva, luego halla con ella al que quiere" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 302).

[124] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 307.

[125] "Descansa y camina el alma en una soledad sin que le haga estorbo toda la ocupación exterior, que es harta y de trabajo para el cuerpo flaco y enfermo" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, pp. 298–99).

[126] "Todas las veces que trata de inmensidad y incomprensibilidad y que no hay palabras, bien la entiendo" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 310).

[127] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 310.

[128] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 312.

of contemplative experience in her treatises. He was being considered for beatification by the church. Thus his correspondence would have also served to support her case if the examination of her writings had led church authorities to question her orthodoxy.

Segunda relación (1633) gives another account of her prayer life. Again she finds the task difficult "because even though one can say something, it is impossible for the soul to express in words her experiences of God."[129] Echoing *Primera relación*, Cecilia returns to her experiences of God's immensity, but with greater detail and deeper knowledge:

> It seems the soul is stuck in an immense sea, in which the immensity is such that it cannot be expressed, and all the time in the world is not enough to enjoy God and grow in Him…and often the soul goes into suspension and all activity ceases, with God acting in her more and more; and even though the deepest part of this suspension, where one cannot attend to anything, doesn't last long, it bestows a great deal each time it happens.[130]

She recounts several occasions in which a phrase from scripture or a poetic verse immediately lifts her up to God and gives her special insight into its meaning or significance.[131] She points out that God also communicates very lofty knowledge without words: "God also reveals very lofty things without words within himself and in the very essence of the soul, and what the soul sees there and the knowledge is so great and exalted, more so than when it comes with a word."[132]

Cecilia stresses her own inadequacy more than once in *Segunda relación*, calling herself a vile worm.[133] In the first lines of a prayer, she asks, "Who among those who enjoy this grace was able to merit it or

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[129] "porque aunque se pueda decir algo, es imposible expresar el alma con palabras lo que de Dios siente" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 329).

[130] "Parece ha estancado el alma en un piélago inmenso, a donde lo inmenso que allí se le da no lo sabe decir, y para gozarlo y crecer en El todo tiempo es corto…y a menudo se suspende el alma y cesa toda acción, haciendo Dios más y más en ella; y aunque lo subido desta suspensión no dura mucho, que a ninguna cosa podría atender, es mucho lo que da en cada una" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 329).

[131] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, pp. 332–36.

[132] "También muestra Dios cosas altísimas sin palabras en Sí mismo, y en la misma esencia del alma, y lo que allí ve y la inteligencia es tan grande y mayor que cuando trae consigo la palabra" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 336).

[133] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, pp. 329, 336.

work to gain it? Oh, my Jesus, only your own!"[134] Looking back at the favors she has received, she proclaims,

> May He be blessed for wanting to communicate Himself to creatures, and to a vile worm like me. There is no reason for anyone not to be on intimate terms with Him, that to anyone that wants to befriend Him and seeks to do so through the paths that the Holy Faith has made available, the Divine Majesty will agree to be known and experienced. In this He takes His delight and this brought Him from heaven to the earth: to have friends to whom He could relate and communicate. May He be glorified.[135]

Cecilia indeed knew of what she spoke. Perhaps she found it tiresome to respond to requests for written accounts of her experience. *Primera relación* was written only four years before *Segunda relación*. In *Primera relación* she remarks that her time would be better spent alone with God and in silence than in writing. Even though she obeys, she also points out that the best experiences will not be expressed because it is impossible to do so.[136] She used the composition of *Primera relación* to set down the elements of a defense of her writings and experiences, should such a defense become necessary. She complains at the end of *Primera relación* that the manuscripts of all that she had written have been taken from her and not returned.[137] In *Segunda relación* Cecilia does not seem concerned with defending herself. She is more absorbed in her relationship with God and wishes the same relationship for others.

Peers notes that it is clear from Cecilia's prose that "she learned much less of her mysticism from books than from experience."[138] Even so, it is clear that she stands on the shoulders of two giants, Santa Teresa and San Juan. She was fortunate to receive an excellent humanistic education at the feet of her mother. She also benefited from the

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[134] "¿Quién de los que gozan de este bien pudo merecerle ni qué trabajos alcanzarle? ¡Oh, Jesús mío, sólo los tuyos!" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 330).

[135] "Sea Él bendito que así quiere comunicarse a las criaturas, y a un gusano tan vil. No había de haber ninguna que no tratase con Él estrechamente; que cualquiera que le quiera ser amigo, y le procure por los caminos que la Santa Fe tiene dispuestos… se le dará su Divina Majestad a conocer y sentir; que en esto se deleita Él, y esto le trajo del cielo a la tierra, tener amigos con quien tratar y a quien comunicarse. Sea Él glorificado" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 336).

[136] "así quedará en silencio lo mejor" (Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 297).

[137] Díaz Cerón, ed., *Obras completas*, p. 320.

[138] Peers, *Studies of the Spanish Mystics*, 3: 67.

support of her siblings, especially her sister María and her brother Antonio. Cecilia distinguished herself in many of the same areas as did her order's founder, Santa Teresa. She devoted herself to contemplative prayer and enjoyed deep experiences of union with God. She also was able to write, teach, and lead her community. In an environment hostile to these kinds of accomplishments in a woman, she lived up to the legacy bequeathed to her by Santa Teresa de Jesús and San Juan de la Cruz.

THE INFLUENCES OF SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA AND SAINT TERESA OF ÁVILA ON THE COLOMBIAN NUN JERÓNIMA NAVA Y SAAVEDRA (1669–1727)

Clara E. Herrera

In recent times, with the increased interest in literature written by women, and particularly in their "spiritual life narrations" produced in the early modern period, scholars have focused on the writings of religious women in the Spanish colonies. The emphasis has been, understandably, on the most dominant religious centers of the time: Nueva España (Mexico) and Perú.[1] Some students of the subject have begun now to turn their attention to other regions, such as Nueva Granada (Colombia) and Chile.[2] If convents in Nueva Granada were not so numerous nor so rich as those in the two important viceroyalties, nonetheless one is especially interesting as the cradle of Madre Castillo, recognized as the most prominent colonial mystic in the early 18th century.[3] Other convents harbored less well known (and virtually unstudied) literary nuns such as Jerónima Nava y Saavedra, who is the focus of this essay. Her convent, Santa Clara of Santafé de Bogotá, was

[1] Josefina Muriel has written a substantial number of articles and books on colonial nuns. Two of her most well-known works are *Conventos de monjas en la Nueva España* (México, 1946) and *Los recogimientos de mujeres: respuesta a una problemática novohispana* (México, 1974). More recently, Asunción Lavrin has made important contributions to the field, particularly her book *Latin American Women: Historical Perspectives* (London, 1978), a collection of essays presenting an historical examination of women in pre-20th-century Latin America. Also the writings of female religious in Spain and Spanish America (Peru and Mexico) have been studied and analysed by Electa Arenal and Stacey Schlau in *Untold Sisters*: *Hispanic Nuns in Their Own Works* (Albuquerque, 1989).

[2] Along these lines, Kathryn Joy McKnight published *The Mystic of Tunja: The Writings of Madre Castillo, 1671–1742* (Amherst, 1997), a thoughtful analysis of the life and writings of the Colombian nun. Then Kristine Ibsen published *Women's Spiritual Autobiography in Colonial Spanish America* (Gainesville, 1999), a comprehensive study of discursive techniques employed in spiritual autobiographies of nuns from Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru.

[3] In Colombia, Madre Castillo has always been so recognized, as scholar Karen Stolley testifies, hailing her as "the most important figure of religious letters in the early eighteenth century" (Karen Stolley, "The Eighteenth Century: Narrative Forms, Scholarship, and Learning," in *The Cambridge History of Latin-American Literature*, ed. Roberto González Echevarría and Enrique Pupo Walker [Cambridge, 1996], p. 341).

founded in 1628 by the archbishop of the capital, Fernando Arias de Ugarte.[4] Although only relatively opulent, it was still a proper sanctuary for elite women of Grenadine society. (Since to profess as black-veil nuns, or choir nuns, aspirants had to pay a dowry of 2,000 pesos, poor women were excluded, as were women of mixed heritage.[5]) The convent was, then, an ideal setting that provided Jerónima with the opportunity to live alone and devote herself to a life otherwise out of reach for a woman of her time: a life of contemplation, learning, and writing.

This religious environment, paradoxically liberating and creative, was crucial for the kind of writing it stimulated. Although Spanish convents were cloistered, their *locutorios* allowed them to become important cultural centers in the colonies, where nuns were engaged in many activities. However, they still had time to dedicate to contemplative prayer, which would lead some of them to undergo visionary experiences, ecstatic raptures, or prophetic moments. Confessors or spiritual directors of such religious women might request written penitential confessions, or "spiritual life narrations", to establish the divine origin of their experiences and the orthodoxy of their writings—a practice typical too of Spanish convents. The particularities of these narrations largely depended on the confessors as well as on the nuns' level of literacy. As Kristine Ibsen asserts, "because a nun could not write her life story unless sanctioned or obligated to do so by a male religious authority, women's life stories even in their original autobiographical manuscripts, are always mediated by the presence of their confessors."[6] Usually these autobiographies were used by confessors to write full-length hagiographies after the deaths of their penitents. In her analysis of the confessor-confessant relationship in early modern Spain, Jodi Bilinkoff substantiates that the main objective of these texts was to promote "saintly women models for all Christians and for posterity."[7] Ibsen adds, "[i]n viceregal Spanish America these

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[4] Constanza Toquica Clavijo, *El Convento de Santa Clara de Santafé de Bogotá en los siglos XVII y XVIII*, M.A. Thesis (Bogotá, 1999), p. 97.

[5] In addition, "The one who is to be received as a Nun has to be twelve years old, of good origins, virtuous, and of good reputation" ("La que huviere de ser recevida para Monja sea de hedad de doce años, bien nacida, virtuosa, y de buena fama") (*Regla, constituciones y ordenaciones de las religiosas de S. Clara de la ciudad de S. Feé de Bogotá: en el Nuevo Reyno de Granada: de las Indias, de el Perú* [Rome, 1699], p. 190).

[6] Ibsen, *Women's Spiritual Autobiography*, p. 11.

[7] Jodi Bilinkoff, "Touched by Teresa: Readers and Their Responses, 1588–1750," in *The Heirs of St. Teresa of Ávila*, ed. Christopher Wilson (Washington, 2006), p. 117.

biographies took on yet another, more political agenda: if the New World could produce saintly men and women, it was proof of God's favor toward the colonies."[8]

Well known as it is that the New World was influenced by the religious sensibilities and practices of the Old, it is not surprising, then, that the "life narrations" composed beyond the Atlantic were affected by those written in early modern Catholic Europe. And, indeed, during the 17th and 18th centuries there was on the Continent a very effective plan of translation, publication, and distribution of *Lives* of exemplary women, not only across Europe but also into the colonies.[9] In Spain this promotion of inner spirituality was longstanding, having started in the early 16th century with the Church's translation into Castilian of medieval mystical texts, a strategy implemented particularly by the influential Cardinal Francisco Ximénez de Cisneros (1436–1517), prelate, religious reformer and twice regent of Spain.[10] These translations, together with spiritual autobiographies produced in Spain, inevitably circulated in households and convents of Spanish America. It is this phenomenon that prompted the present study, a preliminary examination of the influences on Jerónima Nava of two prominent spiritual figures, Catherine of Siena and Teresa of Ávila, to see how Jerónima inscribed her life story within the literary tradition established by her European models.

One must bear in mind, though, that there is a 400-year span to be covered from the medieval Catherine to the Renaissance Teresa and then to the baroque colonial Jerónima. Cardinal Cisneros had commissioned Castilian translations of several medieval mystical texts, including the lives of Saint Angela of Foligno (1248–1309) and Saint Catherine of Siena (1347–80). He thus made these available to many Spanish readers, among them Saint Teresa (1515–82), who mentions Catherine in her works. Teresa's books, in turn, were read by many others. First published by Luis de León in 1588, they were very successful, not only in Spain and its colonies, but throughout Catholic Europe. Her *Life* was, as Bilinkoff puts it, "by early modern standards, a 'best seller.'"[11] Both Catherine of Siena and Teresa of Ávila then became spiritual models for other devout women, especially women

[8] Ibsen, *Women's Spiritual Autobiography*, p. 12.
[9] Bilinkoff, "Touched by Teresa," p. 98.
[10] McKnight, *The Mystic of Tunja*, p. 30.
[11] Bilinkoff, "Touched by Teresa," p. 107.

who entered the religious life, like Jerónima Nava, for whom their writings served as a significant empowering and authorizing source.

In Italy, Catherine was the most famous of the so-called "holy women", uncloistered females who lived an ascetic life, alone or within a household. As was true of many of these, she was active in a tertiary (or lay) order—in her case, one attached to a Dominican house, where she participated in charitable work.[12] Though she was not a traditional nun, she has been described by scholar Gillian T. W. Ahlgren as "a medieval mystic who had extensive visionary experiences, produced texts, and engaged in church reform, overcoming scrutiny, resistance, and even opposition to her role as a reformer."[13] But the secular dimension of Catherine's religious life would, after the Council of Trent (1545–63), no longer be accepted by the Counter-Reformation Church. In regard to nuns, the Council provided that in all monasteries "the enclosure of nuns be carefully restored… for no nun, after her profession, shall it be lawful to go out of her convent, even for a brief period, under any pretext whatsoever".[14] As Margaret L. King and Albert Rabil aptly note: "The extraclaustral phenomenon of the 'holy woman' is delegitimized, and even the charitable and educational activities of laywomen are placed under ecclesiastical surveillance."[15] Female mysticism came under intense scrutiny, and confessors became the most important agents of the Catholic Church in enforcing new Counter-Reformation ideals. Even though the female reformers in 16th-century Spain, including Saint Teresa (the most famous and representative figure), supported the new restrictions on nuns in their convents, nevertheless Saint Catherine, as a religious and political reformer, remained a model for them. That more than a century later, the lives of both saints—among other mystical accounts—did indeed circulate widely in Spanish America has been demonstrated by a discovery by Josefina Muriel (a prominent historian of colonial Mexico)

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[12] Margaret L. King and Albert Rabil Jr., "Women and Religion in Early Modern Europe: The Historical Context," in *Teaching Other Voices: Women and Religion in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Margaret L. King and Albert Rabil Jr. (Chicago, 2007), p. 5.

[13] Gillian T. W. Ahlgren, "Ecstasy, Prophecy, and Reform: Catherine of Siena as a Model for Holy Women of Sixteenth-Century Spain," in *The Mystical Gesture: Essays on Medieval and Early Modern Spiritual Culture in Honor of Mary E. Giles*, ed. Robert Boenig (Aldershot, 2000), p. 53.

[14] J. Waterford, ed. and trans., *The Council of Trent: The Twenty-Fifth Session (The Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Oecumenical Council of Trent)* (London, 1848), p. 240.

[15] King and Rabil, "Women and Religion," p. 6.

of 44 examples of such texts in a single Mexican convent.[16] We can therefore assume that the Castilian translation of Raymond of Capua's *Life of Catherine of Siena* as well as Saint Teresa of Ávila's books were well known in the convent of Santa Clara of Santafé de Bogotá.

In 1994, the autobiography of Colombian nun Jerónima Nava y Saavedra (1669–1727) was published under the title *Autobiografía de una monja venerable*.[17] Previously, the account was believed to have been written by her confessor, Father Juan de Olmos; probably because of his lengthy introduction to the nun's work, it was usually listed under his name. The resultant confusion in authorship has meant that Jerónima Nava has not received the literary scrutiny she deserves, especially by feminist critics—something which is now beginning to be remedied. As in Spain, colonial nuns wrote their lives at the behest of their confessors, with the same goal: an inquiry into the veracity of their religiosity. During 20 years, then, Jerónima wrote the account of her life for her confessor, some 64 folio pages and six "papelillos" (short separate pieces), collected in a manuscript volume to be found in the Biblioteca Nacional de Colombia.

But in Jerónima's text, unlike Catherine of Siena's biography or Saint Teresa's *Life*, we do not find much information related to her daily life, to her initiation into the spiritual walk, or to her prescriptive guide, her "camino de perfección". While Father Olmos emphasized Jerónima's biographical information in his introductory "Elogio", Jerónima's autobiography itself is an extensive narrative of her visions—around 200 of them—preceded in only some cases by a brief reference to her monastic routine. When she experienced her visions, the practical world was transformed into a diffuse background, and her mystical world became the focus of her life. The one significant allusion to her physical existence was the portrayal of her poor health. As with Catherine and Teresa, whose lives were also beleaguered by illness, Jerónima (in spite of her faithful devotion) felt inadequate to model her life on Christ's. Yet she perceived a connection between her illness and Christ's agony, a premise necessary to understand her narrative.

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[16] Josefina Muriel, "Lo que leían las mujeres de la Nueva España," in *La literatura novohispana: revisión crítica y propuestas metodológicas*, eds. José Pascual Buxó and Arnulfo Herrera (Mexico, 1994), p. 169.

[17] Jerónima Nava y Saavedra, *Autobiografía de una monja venerable*, ed. Ángela Inés Robledo (Cali, 1994). The translations that follow are my own.

Through this relationship, she felt the Lord reaching out to her and empowering her.

The minimal presence of Jerónima Nava in her account requires for us a few details from the introduction to her life and writings provided by her confessor. An orphan from birth, Jerónima voluntarily joined the Santa Clara convent, where she was ordained at the age of 24, and where she would remain, carrying out various posts (from door-keeper of the convent to abbess) until her death at the age of 58. Father Olmos, who was her spiritual director for 20 years, stated that her physical beauty matched her intellect: "clear, subtle, delicate, and sharp."[18] He added that she was "so admirable, that learned and wise people that knew her, when seeing her high capacity, said, with reason, that it was not a woman's intelligence, because she was able to understand extremely high and profound topics"; "so magnanimous and strong she was that, I can asseverate, she could have competed with the strongest manly strength."[19]

As Ibsen recognizes, Father Olmos reverted to masculine attributes to describe Mother Nava, as was usual in hagiographical and devotional depictions of women defined as saintly.[20] However, Jerónima herself manifested—as had Catherine and Teresa—absolute humility, joined with an equal self-determination:

> What Your Excellency will see in this writing is what has impressed me; without excluding or exaggerating anything; and with God's grace, everything conforms to the rules of truth, without any mistakes. And because I am a poor ignorant and my sex is so ruinous, I say in everything what seems correct to me.[21]

She further stated: "And my desire to instruct others and the love I feel for other souls are such, that my sex makes me impatient, because it

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[18] "claro, subtil, delicado y vivo" (Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 37).

[19] "[t]an admirable, que personas de letras y juisio que le trataron, experimentando tan alta capasidad, desían, y con rasón, que no era entendimiento mujeril; pues discurría remontándose en cosas altíssimas y escudriñaba las profundíssimas" (Nava, *Autobiografía*, pp. 37–38). He added that she was "[t]an magnánima y fuerte que, puedo aseverar, pudo competir con la más grande fortalesa varonil."

[20] Ibsen, *Women's Spiritual Autobiography*, p. 92.

[21] "Lo que Vuestra Merced verá por este escrito, es lo que tengo ynpresionado; sin dejar cuidadosamente cosa ninguna, ni aver ponderado ni exagerado lo que llebo dicho; y con la grasia de Dios no saliera un punto de las reglas de la verdad, ni me parese que equibocadamente dijera ninguna cosa. Y porque soi una pobre ygnorante y mi sexo es tan ruin, digo en casi todo que me paresía" (Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 99).

impedes me from doing something for the One who has done so much for me."[22] If Jerónima often alluded to her incapacity to describe some of her experiences (using expressions such as: "And this is something that, although I've experienced it, I cannot explain"[23]), and if her texts resulted from a request by her confessor—more an obligatory justification than a rhetorical exercise—, nevertheless she showed a remarkable capacity to describe the richness of her interior life and the variety of her visions.

Nava's narrative indeed reveals her spiritual progress. Of amazing religiosity, this woman "saw" God constantly in multiple forms: among others as a shepherd with his staff,[24] as a sheep grazing in a field,[25] as a gallant captain,[26] or as the father of a family, "powerful and liberal".[27] Occasionally, she transcended the physical world and interacted with other saints: "I saw the Lord and I gave him my confessor's heart…I also wanted to give him mine. Saint Francisco Xavier was there, and then, when I decided to give the Lord my heart, the Saint Apostle said to me: 'Take it out of your chest.'"[28] Other times her confessor took part in her visions, which frequently helped to alleviate the tensions in their relationship: "On many occasions I have seen my confessor ready to abandon me (and I have found his decision reasonable)"; "and I said to the Lord that because He was my father He should take care of me…And I think that, holding me in His arms, He did not know where to take me or to whom to give me; and He said that whoever takes care of me will receive His Kingdom."[29] Finally, in some cases,

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[22] "Y la ansia de ynstruir y amor que tengo a las almas es tanta que me ynpasienta mi sexo porque me ympide el que yo haga algo por quien tanto hizo por mí" (Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 71).

[23] "Y esto es lo que yo, aunque lo e experimentado, no lo puedo explicar" (Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 56).

[24] Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 73.

[25] Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 76.

[26] Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 77.

[27] "Poderoso y liberal" (Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 79).

[28] "Vi al Señor y le entregué el corazón de mi confessor…Yo quise también hazer entrega del mío; estava presente San Francisco Xavier y luego que resolví entregar mi corazón, me desía el Santo Apóstol: 'sácatelo del pecho'" (Nava, *Autobiografía*, pp. 69–70).

[29] "Han sido muchas las ocasiones en que e visto al dicho mi confesor propenso a dejarme (y io le e encontrado razón)"; "y le dije al Señor que pues era mi padre cuidase de mí…Y me paresía que tomándome en brazos Su Majestad estava como que no savía dónde llebarme ni a quién entregarme; y desía que a quien me criase, daría Su Reyno" (Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 74).

in order to bring together the narrative discussion, she made reference to real events; but generally she subordinated what happened in the exterior world to what happened in her visionary world. And it was in this world that Jerónima became both self-aware and self-conscious; in short, able to affirm herself as an individual with a mission and a spiritual intermediary for God.

In undertaking that dedication, it can be argued, Jerónima took shelter under some aspects of Catherine's model of female holiness.[30] Catherine was a woman who frequently experienced visions and practiced a rigorous ascetical life—the only way for a woman of her time to overcome the barriers to spiritual leadership. We need to remember that women were excluded from formal education and teaching, and (even more so) from preaching. According to the hagiographical portrait written by Raymond of Capua, Catherine's confessor and best friend during her adult life, God had planted in her a zeal for souls from the time she was an infant[31] and chose her to have a special role in the redemption of humanity. On several occasions God showed Catherine the efficacy of her intercessory prayer. We read in Capua's text, for example, that the Lord showed Catherine, after the death of a woman, that the woman's soul was saved because of the saint's prayers: "See, most loving daughter, for you I have retrieved this soul that was already lost."[32] And, as on other occasions, He reiterated her role: "you may burn ever more ardently to procure the salvation of all souls, and induce others to do the same, according to the grace that is given to you."[33] This capacity becomes an important point of comparison with Jerónima's conceptualization of her vocation. An analysis of such visions in her autobiographical work shows how Mother Nava also thought of herself as a person designated by God to be a participant in humanity's climactic act of salvation. Using the divine authority and power she received from God, she became a valid agent for redemption. This zeal led her to identify with Christ the Redeemer in the same manner as Catherine did. It is through such identification with the redemptory Christ that she expanded her horizon of per-

[30] Gillian Ahlgren highlights the main aspects of the medieval model of female holiness: intercessory prayer, visions, ecstasy, and humility (Ahlgren, "Ecstasy," p. 53).

[31] Raymond of Capua, *The Life of St. Catherine of Siena 1347–1380*, trans. George Lamb (Rockford, 2003), pp. 33, 108. (This English translation was derived from *S. Caterina de Siena: vita scritta dal B. Raimondo da Capua, confessore della santa*, trans. P. Giuseppe Tinagli [Siena, 1934].)

[32] Capua, *The Life*, p. 137.

[33] Capua, *The Life*, p. 137.

sonal salvation to a wider social scope. Her intimacy with God gave her that humility and compassion necessary for her concern with the well-being of others.

As Catherine's confessor had written of the saint, Father Olmos established in his "Elogio" Mother Jerónima's profound commitment to the salvation of souls,[34] as confirmed by her own account. Sometimes voluntarily, and other times because she was asked to do so, she gave advice and motivation to those who deviated from the "camino de perfección", always with an absolute confidence in her direct connection to Christ. On one occasion, when a nun of her convent was close to dying, she turned to Jerónima to intercede for her with God. As Mother Nava noted: "And I saw how the Lord called her lovingly, and put her by His side. It was clear to me how He gave her loving help and great comfort at the time of her death."[35] Throughout Jerónima's visions, she appropriated a certain level of power in the long tradition of intercessory prayer, with her role as mediator between God and humanity ordered to her directly by Jesus: "Then I tried to do what He ordered me: to beg His Eternal Father to forgive those who offended Him."[36] Empowered by that authority, she asked God for the salvation of other believers. She was even able to acquire her own independence by leading her confessor to recognize her as an agent for him before God. He asked her to pray for his soul, subverting their spiritual power relationship of confessor-penitent.[37] Moreover, through her co-redemptive mission, she authorized herself to unveil her theological knowledge, an activity that was proscribed to women at that time: "And it was clear to me, that God was pleased that I instructed ignorant people."[38] She affirmed this role: "And I'm sure that many souls would have been lost if they had not communicated to me their faults."[39] We see then how Mother Nava was able to adjudicate to herself the important mission of co-redeemer,

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[34] Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 40.

[35] "Y vi cómo el Señor la llamaba amorosamente y la metía en su costado. Y entendí que le dio amorosísimos auxilios y grandes consuelos a la hora de su muerte" (Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 113).

[36] "Yo procuré hazer, por entonses, lo que me mandó; que fue que le rogase a su Eterno Padre perdonase a los que así le ultrajavan" (Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 68).

[37] There are numerous such assertions in her narrative; see pages 69, 103, 119, 133, and 136.

[38] "Y tube clara noticia de que gustava Dios que ynstruyese a la jente ignorante" (Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 71).

[39] "Y tengo por muy sierto que muchas almas se ubieran perdido si no ubieran llegado a comunicar conmigo sus errores" (Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 71).

superimposing that unconventional vision on others, and creating a protagonistic sensibility with her confessor, other priests, and other nuns of the convent.

Similar experiences enjoyed by Catherine and Jerónima, although happening at different times, are more intriguing than one might at first expect. It is Raymond of Capua (not Catherine, of course) who told memorable stories about her adult life, especially about her particularly intense visions: as summarized by Karen Scott, "her mystical marriage with Christ, her drinking from the wound of Christ's side, her exchange of hearts with Christ, her reception of Christ's stigmata and her mystical death."[40] That some of the mystical phenomena which Catherine underwent were also similarly experienced by Jerónima suggests a strong influence on the Grenadine nun of what Capua narrates in *The Life of Catherine of Siena*. But given the space limitations for this essay, only a few of the overlapping mystical incidents will be examined briefly to show in a comparative sense how the two women shared these visions. It is important to bear in mind that these can be only thematic resemblances since, as has been emphasized, Catherine's experiences are only indirectly presented.

The first and most famous vision of Catherine of Siena is the one related to her mystical marriage with Christ. The Lord said to her:

> Since for love of me you have forsaken vanities and despised the pleasure of the flesh and fastened all the delights of your heart on me, now, when the rest of the household are feasting and enjoying themselves, I have determined to celebrate the wedding feast of your soul and to espouse me in faith as I promised.[41]

At that moment, the Virgin Mary—accompanied by John the Evangelist, the Apostle Paul, Saint Dominic, and the prophet David—appeared to her. While David played his harp, the Virgin celebrated a marriage between her Son and Catherine. The Son of God gave His bride a gold ring with four pearls and a beautiful diamond; slipping it onto her second finger, he said to her, "There! I marry you to me in faith, to me, your Creator and Saviour."[42] According to Capua's nar-

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[40] Karen Scott, "Mystical Death, Bodily Death: Catherine of Siena and Raymond of Capua on the Mystic's Encounter with God," in *Gendered Voices: Medieval Saints and Their Interpreters*, ed. Catherine M. Mooney (Philadelphia, 1999), p. 139.

[41] Capua, *The Life*, p. 99.

[42] Capua, *The Life*, p. 100.

ration, the vision ended at that moment, but the ring—visible only to her—remained on Catherine's finger.

We have in Jerónima another visionary who was similarly married to the Lord. She narrates that one day, after having taken communion, the Lord appeared to her in the form of a young man, dressed in a white tunic, exposing His five wounds. These nevertheless enhanced His beauty, His hair being as blond as gold. Taking a chain in His hand, He put it around her neck and then slipped a ring on her finger, expressing His desire to marry her. All these actions made Jerónima blush with confusion and shame because she considered herself unworthy of Him. As in Catherine's marriage, the Virgin Mary was present; but in Jerónima's case, she acted as a godmother who—willing to celebrate the wedding—dressed Jerónima in a white, shining tunic.[43] At that time it was customarily the use of the chain or "lazo nupcial" that signified the spouses' intimate union. Having two wedding witnesses (a godmother and a godfather) was also a contemporary custom.

The next significant vision is the drinking from the wounds of Christ's side, for which there are several instances in Catherine's life. One day, as a recognition of Catherine's piety and consideration for an infirm woman, the Lord appeared to her, brought her toward the laceration on His side, and whispered to her: "'Drink, daughter, the liquid from my side, and it will fill your soul with such sweetness that its wonderful effects will be felt even by the body which for my sake you despised.'" And she abundantly partook of the liquid until, at a sign from the Lord, she stopped: "sated and yet at the same time still longing for more."[44] On another occasion, being asked by her confessor to stay away from the altar during mass because her crying could disturb the priests, she informed the Lord in a low voice that she wanted to receive the Eucharist. The Lord appeared to her and asked her to satisfy herself with His body and blood. She drank abundantly, and "such sweetness ascended into her soul that she thought she must die of love."[45] This vision of drinking from the wounds of Jesus is much more frequent in the life narration of Jerónima Nava than in her predecessor's. To cite only one example, Jerónima, at the Divine Office, was invited by Jesus to lie down on His chest. Then

[43] Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 82.
[44] Capua, *The Life*, p. 148.
[45] Capua, *The Life*, pp. 170–71.

she, desiring to drink the blood at her side, was allowed by Him not only to sip His blood but to taste a little portion of His flesh.[46] In this way, on many occasions, she longed for such communion. He always generously offered it to her.

The last vision to be considered is the exchange of hearts with Christ, one of the experiences that gave testimony to Catherine's extraordinary spiritual vigor. After Catherine asked the Lord to give her a clean heart, she had a vision in which the Lord came to her, opened her left side, and took out her heart. She told her confessor that she stayed without a heart for some time, until one day when she was praying at the church of Preaching Friars, which the Sisters of Penance of Saint Dominic of Siena attended. There she had a vision in which a light of heaven encircled her. In the light appeared the Lord, who was holding in His hands a human heart, "bright red and shining". She fell to the ground and started trembling. The Lord came to her, opened her left side again, and put the heart He was holding inside of her, saying: "'Dearest daughter, as I took the heart away from you the other day, now, you see, I am giving you mine, so that you can go on living with it forever.'"[47] He closed the opening. As some of her companions attested, a scar remained on that side of Catherine's body as a sign of the miracle.[48] According to Capua, after Catherine's reception of the Lord's heart, her interior revelations became more perfect and abundant than ever, especially after receiving the sacrament. It was a turning point in her visionary life.

Following her inspirational mother, Jerónima narrates a similar experience. One day, when Jerónima was praying, she felt the lovely presence of the Lord, and her soul became full of joyous contentment. Her heart began to cry. She felt that the Lord hugged her and said, "my daughter, my love, for whom I've been looking with so much desire, you are mine, I possess you, my love has conquered you."[49] He stretched His right hand and took out her heart. With the other hand, He took out His own heart, putting it into the cavity of her chest. She commented that she was surprised that God was so compassionate as

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[46] Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 87.
[47] Capua, *The Life*, p. 165.
[48] Capua, *The Life*, p. 165.
[49] "Hija mía, amada mía, a quien yo con tantas ansias e buscado, que ya eres mía, que te poseo, que te redujeron mis amores" (Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 65).

to put her sinful heart in His pure body, and she asked Him to give her the grace to appreciate His kindness.[50] This vision, along with the others, suggests how Jerónima adopted certain thematic aspects from Catherine's life to present herself as a privileged spiritual being.

The literary impact of Saint Teresa on Jerónima's writing reflects another, more intricate type of influence. The rhetorical strategies used by Teresa were adapted by Jerónima to construct her self-representation as co-redeemer, visionary, reformer, and teacher. If one follows the classification established by renowned scholar Asunción Lavrin in her account of colonial Mexico's nuns, Jerónima Nava can be considered a visionary (but not a mystical) writer.[51] That is, she nourished her life with spiritual visions and conversations with God, Christ, the Virgin Mary, the saints, and the angels. She even experienced moments of ecstasy and the ineffable peace of union with God. She did not write about the processes of understanding the divine nature, or the mystical path that would lead to complete union, as Saint Teresa did in her works. However, Jerónima's exposition shows techniques used by Teresa, especially in her *Vida*, to relate her remarkable visions and (as Jerónima would do later) to fashion herself as teacher, reformer, and intercessor before God.

Gillian Ahlgren asserts that Teresa's shaping of herself took two major forms: first, the disassociation from her own will by elaborate demonstrations of humility and obedience; and, second, the affirmation of her role as intercessor before God, "continuing the medieval tradition of quasi-sacerdotal expression and establishing herself as a teacher and transmitter of divine wisdom."[52] When García de Toledo, one of Teresa's confessors, ordered her to give a full report of her spiritual life, he became, as Alison Weber notes, "an intermediary between the writer and other potentially hostile readers", and "a premodern editor, entrusted with all the prerogatives of emendation or deletion."[53] She cites Teresa: "I don't know if I'm speaking foolish words. If I am,

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[50] Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 65.

[51] Asunción Lavrin, *Vidas y el reino de Dios: interpretaciones femeninas en el México colonial*, presented at the XI Reunión de Historiadores Mexicanos, Estadounidenses y Canadienses, Monterrey, Mexico, 1–4 October, 2003.

[52] Gillian T. W. Ahlgren, *Teresa of Ávila and the Politics of Sanctity* (Ithaca, 1996), p. 68.

[53] Alison Weber, *Teresa of Ávila and the Rhetoric of Femininity* (Princeton, 1990), p. 69.

may your Reverence tear them up; and if they are not, help my stupidity by adding here a great deal".[54]

Jerónima also makes Father Olmos a preeminent editor: "What Your Excellency will see in this writing is what has impressed me."[55] She adds: "It is with pleasure that I entrust my writings to your understanding."[56] Thus Jerónima, following Teresa's rhetoric of obedience, established her readiness to agree with her superior's command in order to be able to represent herself in ways otherwise unacceptable for women of her time. Jerónima's submission, for example, allowed her to subvert some of the restrictions placed on church women, such as being a teacher. To justify her agency as such, she alludes—in a passage cited earlier—to God's authority:

> And I had clear news that God liked that I instructed ignorant people; because here were many souls that were lost for lack of illumination; and then I tried, and I did instruct some of them… And I'm sure that many souls would have been lost if they had never communicated their faults to me.[57]

She was very aware of her limitations as a woman, and she expressed her frustration openly: "And the desire of instructing others and my love for their souls are such that my sex makes me impatient because it impedes me from doing something for one who has done so much for me."[58] Although Jerónima filled her text with references to the necessity of absolute divine obedience, she managed, at the same time, to take care of her subordinate position towards her confessor, even to the point of putting her earthly obedience over her godly one. For instance, when God asked her to become the abbess of the convent, she answered Him: "What you are asking me, Lord, I cannot do without consulting my confessor."[59]

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[54] Weber, *Teresa of Ávila*, p. 69.

[55] "Lo que Vuestra Merced verá por este escrito, es lo que tengo impresionado" (Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 99).

[56] "Ban con mucho gusto sujetas a la lima de su entendimiento" (Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 99).

[57] "Y tube clara noticia de que gustava Dios que ynstruyese a la jente ygnorante; pues eran muchas las almas que se perdían por falta de luz y así procuré y lo hize yr ynstruyendo algunas… Y tengo por mui sierto que muchas almas se ubieran perdido si no ubieran llegado a comunicar conmigo sus errores" (Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 71).

[58] "Y la ansia de ynstruir y amor que tengo a las almas es tanta que me ynpasienta mi sexo porque me ympide el que yo haga algo por quien tanto hizo por mí" (Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 71).

[59] "En lo que me significas Señor, no puedo sin consulta de mi confesor" (Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 166).

Although Jerónima manifested her continuous subjection to her confessor, there was an explicit declaration of tension between them. She states that "there have been several occasions on which I've seen my confessor ready to leave me (and I think he is right)."[60] However, it is difficult to imagine Father Olmos abandoning her, taking into consideration his respect for her connection with God. After one of the confrontations between them, Jesus appeared to her in a vision, promising again that whoever took care of her soul would go to heaven.[61] At another time, Jesus told her, "don't be sad, my daughter. Tell your confessor that for now I don't have a person in my confidence that could instruct you. Tell him to do it."[62] And to make Olmos's decision of leaving her even more difficult, Jerónima added that Jesus said to her that she would have been one of His disciples had she been alive in His time.[63] It is clear how Jerónima used her special position with God to control her confessor, not only maintaining her humility and submission, but, as has been noted, subverting the relationship of confessor-confessant by reversing their roles. She became what the confessor was called to be: the intermediary of God on earth. On several occasions, Jerónima wrote how she gave the Lord her confessor's heart. She saw how the Lord received his heart, putting it on top of His own[64]—perhaps a significant variation on her own intimate experience!

Jerónima, like Teresa, frequently used the rhetoric of humility in order to portray herself in a favorable way and dismiss all sense of threat. In one of her visions she asked: "Lord, is it possible that the most despicable of all your creatures, the one who has offended you so much, you look at with such an extreme love that it seems that my wickedness and your mercifulness are vying with each other?"[65] Jerónima kept evoking her "ruined nature", her "ignorance", her "perversion", and her "evilness",[66] as well as her "weakness" and "misery".[67]

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[60] "Han sido muchas las ocasiones en que e visto al dicho mi confesor propenso a dejarme (y io le e encontrado razón)" (Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 74).

[61] Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 74.

[62] "No te aflijas, hija mía. Dile a tu confesor que, por aora, no tengo perzona de mi confiansa que te ynstruya. Que lo haga" (Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 93).

[63] Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 93.

[64] Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 69.

[65] "Señor, ¿es posible que a la más vil de todas tus criaturas, a la que tanto te a ofendido, busquéis vos con tantos extremos de amor que parese que an ydo a porfía mis maldades y tus misericordias?" (Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 96).

[66] Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 132.

[67] Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 173.

And her visionary Lord consented to her status as "poor little woman". He hugged her tightly and said: "Poor ignorant blind one",[68] a designation in which she rejoiced immensely. He also affirmed tenderly: "you are just a poor little woman who knows nothing more than to offend me."[69] Here Jerónima is directly echoing Teresa, who used the same appellation for the same purpose. For as Weber analyses Teresa's double use of the diminutive *mujercilla*, "Teresa concedes to women's weakness, timidity, powerlessness, and intellectual inferiority but uses the concessions ironically to defend, respectively, the legitimacy of her own spiritual favors, her disobedience of 'letrados,' her administrative initiative, her right to 'teach' in the Pauline sense, and her unmediated access to the Scriptures."[70] It is an exemplary instance of Jerónima's openly appropriating from the *Vida* Teresa's rhetoric of humility to structure her own case.

But it must not be forgotten that these women wrote for their confessors. As such, their writings constituted penitential confessions. Saint Teresa, differing from Saint Augustine's specificity about past sins, used what has been identified by Weber as the rhetoric of concession.[71] She made it difficult to grasp the "core" confession by using contradictory rhetorical speech acts, pleading guilty and innocent at the same time. In a passage where she "confessed" her adolescent fall from virtue, she admitted her fault, while insisting on the frivolous influence of a girlfriend.[72] Similarly Jerónima also confessed, "[m]y sins were huge"; but at the same time, she excused herself and inculpated the "sujeto" that most perverted her. Not only did she involve him, but she saw Jesus in a vision claiming her heart from that "sujeto".[73] With her rhetoric of concession, Jerónima was once again following closely Saint Teresa's technique, whether this borrowing was acknowledged or not.

There are more rhetorical strategies in Teresa's writings that could be explored, such as the rhetoric of irony or the rhetoric of authority; but besides rhetorical stances, there is also the matter of verbal style. This influence on Jerónima needs to be touched upon, however

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[68] "Pobre ygnorante siega" (Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 67).
[69] "Tú eres una pobresita que no as savido más que ofenderme" (Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 141).
[70] Weber, *Teresa of Ávila*, pp. 39–40.
[71] Weber, *Teresa of Ávila*, pp. 51–56.
[72] Weber, *Teresa of Ávila*, pp. 53–54.
[73] Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 138.

briefly—for it was not always so closely derivative. Much has been written about Teresa's use of diminutives, an example of which we have already seen. Critics go from traditional analyses, in which her diminutives are a manifestation of her "feminine" style, to the most recent descriptions, which conceive of Teresa's "intentional" use of diminutives as a means of denying the public and didactic nature of her writings.[74] Although Spanish speakers frequently use the diminutive to make a word less harsh or to indicate affection, Teresa's use of diminutives took advantage of the fact that these forms may not be understood the same way all the time. In other words, their meanings can vary with the context in which they are used. As Weber notes, in Teresa "there is nothing that is particularly affectionate about their connotations."[75] Teresa's diminutives are ironic, sarcastic, meiotic, and show a conscious strategic function in her work. Significantly, Jerónima's use of diminutives (it can be argued) has a different purpose. This use can be reduced to two well-demarcated instances: 1) when she speaks about the Christ Child and obviously wants to emphasize His littleness; and 2) when she uses God's word to refer to herself: "Drink, my little lamb, for this is the drinking fountain of my chosen people";[76] or, "because of this little dove I came to the world. Because of this little dove's moaning I pardon sinners."[77] Here she wants to express the special affection the Lord feels for her. It seems clear that Jerónima's writings served her inner needs more than her obedience to her confessor or her didactic intentions, an aspect (in this instance) which distinguishes her from Teresa.

A final point related to verbal style is the impact of Teresa's use of the language of erotic spirituality on the writings of Jerónima. Teresa argued that the language chosen by the Holy Spirit to communicate God's love for man was the language of maternal / erotic spirituality.[78] For her, the union of the masculine and the maternal was the essence of the encounter in the seventh *morada* of *The Interior Castle*, her celebrated book on mystical theology. In this book she used an extended metaphor of the soul as a castle with many chambers

[74] Weber, *Teresa of Ávila*, pp. 15, 93–97.
[75] Weber, *Teresa of Ávila*, p. 93.
[76] "Vebe, obejita mía, que éste es el bebedero de mis escogidos" (Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 165).
[77] "Por esta palomita vine al mundo. Por los jemidos de esta tortolita perdono a los pecadores" (Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 142).
[78] Weber, *Teresa of Ávila*, p. 119.

or dwelling places, where a person's spiritual development was represented as moving from the outermost to the innermost. The seventh *morada* was the innermost chamber, where the soul—at the end of its quest for perfection—is finally united with God. As Weber notes, "[t]he inconsistencies in the allegory [pertaining to what Weber calls the rhetoric of obfuscation]—the soul's transformation from male to female, soldier to bride, the movement from struggle to surrender, from active to passive penetration—reflect the theologically precarious position of Teresa's mysticism, that is, her need to disavow her heresy of 'dejamiento' [ecstatic abandonment] and assert her conviction that mystical experiences are ultimately gratuitous."[79] Weber concludes, "[h]er rhetoric of obfuscation both conceals and protects the Bride of *The Interior Castle*."[80] In Nava we also find this kind of discursive strategy. On certain occasions Jesus is her Son. He says to her: "You are my mother; sustain me with your heart."[81] But at the same time He addresses her as "my daughter, my love, for whom I've been looking so hard, you are mine, I possess you, my love reduced you [to submission]."[82] On another occasion she feels Him hugging her, putting His holy face next to hers. And she adds that when she felt all this, she stayed for more than two hours without being able to move, waiting to die in the hands of that sweetness.[83] As with Teresa, then, the confusion created by her inconsistencies serves Jerónima's writing needs, allowing her to express herself in the language of erotic spirituality. A complete analysis of Nava's adaptation of Teresa's apparent spontaneity, simplicity, and structural confusion in her writing will be necessary for a comprehensive understanding of their rapport.

In order to be sensitive to the manifestations of influences, one should also be appreciative of modifying contexts. It is necessary to recognize Jerónima's own cultural situation, particular and distinctive; for her colonial New World setting would affect both her life and her writings. Convents in America functioned under different social and historical conditions than the tertiary orders in medieval Europe or their more conventional counterparts in the early modern period.

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[79] Weber, *Teresa of Ávila*, p. 122.
[80] Weber, *Teresa of Ávila*, p. 122.
[81] "Eres mi madre, susténtame con tu corazón" (Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 136).
[82] "Hija mía, amada mía, a quien con tantas ansias e buscado, que ya eres mía, que te poseo, que te redujeron mis amores" (Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 65).
[83] Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 78.

Spanish American convents were generally richer than the ones in the Old World, since—besides welcoming women with a religious vocation—they more often served as protection for women of high social rank. Their lives in the convent were a reflection of their previous existence: they would dress elegantly, dine at banquets, have servants and often slaves, and socialize in their accustomed way.[84] The domestic indulgences allowed cloistered women were such that when the Convent of San José in Mexico was founded, the superiors included "not drinking chocolate" as an additional vow to the original ones of poverty, chastity, obedience, and enclosure.[85] The convent where Jerónima Nava professed was no exception, and her writings illuminate for us the lives of Grenadine nuns during the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Faced with this "decadence", Nava would become a reformer—perhaps in a more local way, but in the same manner as Catherine and Teresa.

Despite notable differences of time and place, the three women shared significantly similar concerns as they reacted to comparable developments. Catherine lived in the Italy of Pope Gregory XI, with whom she carried on a detailed correspondence. She encouraged him to fight against the heresies that had erupted in Europe by reforming the various monastic orders. Her life and writings in part reflect the importance of impressing the Pope with her authoritative stance. Teresa lived during the post-Cisneros period, which was generally hostile toward the type of spiritual life that had been supported by the Cardinal. She too needed to prove the divine origin of her favors without appropriating the male prerogative of theological discussion. In colonial America, where convents were a way to ensure racial and class hierarchies, Jerónima would use her privileged nun's spiritual life as an important element in the consolidation of religious colonial rule. It was as such a reformer that, in one of her visions, she asked the Lord to give the convent a religious head, a prelate, to reform their religious observance. He answered: "That will be when you will be a Prelate, because then I will be one. I will also be one."[86] As a leader she was able to change some of the secular habits of the convent, returning them more closely to traditional practices.

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[84] Arenal and Schlau, *Untold Sisters*, p. 339.

[85] Ibsen, *Women's Spiritual Autobiography*, p. 7.

[86] "Eso será quando tú seas Prelada, que lo seré yo; también yo e de ser" (Nava, *Autobiografía*, p. 162).

This essay, then, in undertaking to introduce the importance of Catherine's and Teresa's influences on a colonial nun, and by exploring in a preliminary way the impact of her models and inspiration, has also traced an impressive lineage over centuries and worlds as the three figures embody values and actions passed on through their writings. It is a subject that, in all aspects, invites further investigation. Future studies will consider the ways in which Jerónima moves away from her models and becomes uniquely her own spokeswoman.

A NEW WAY OF LIVING?
LUISA DE CARVAJAL AND THE LIMITS OF MYSTICISM

Glyn Redworth

In the mid-1620s, almost two dozen people gave testimony at the abortive investigation into the sanctity of Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza. She had died a dozen years earlier, on 2 January 1613/14, in the English capital city of London, where she had lived for the last nine years of her life. With good reason she can be regarded as one of the first, if not the first, female missionary of modern times.[1]

What the woman who knew her best had to say about her saintliness was as honest as it was unhelpful. Inés de la Asunción testified that Luisa was not regarded "as a woman of revelations but rather of great virtue and insight".[2] She also remembered her mistress had said nothing about "whether she had or not any revelations, raptures or ecstasies", adding that in fact she was "very much against these things". She concentrated instead on giving evidence about Luisa's "solid virtues".[3] Inés had known her for 13 years, having shared in her life of poverty and good works before being abruptly ordered into a convent when her mistress abandoned Spain for her ultimate destination, Protestant England. Luisa was undoubtedly a saint as far as Inés was concerned, but her companion would not claim that the proof of this lay in her mystical gifts. Nor was she alone in downplaying this aspect of her mistress's spiritual life. Isabel de la Cruz, another companion, recalled

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[1] The manuscript records of the inquiry are to be found in a series of boxes in the Convento de la Encarnación in Madrid. These include the majority of letters to and from Luisa. Though scrupulously preserved, they are not formally catalogued, and it is only possible to identify the dozens of documents by a very simple description. "Proceso" refers to the *legajo* of 700 folios and more of formal depositions; I also make use here of Inés's Draft Submission, as well as a letter from a Jesuit priest, Blackfan. For more information, see Glyn Redworth, *The She-Apostle: The Extraordinary Life and Death of Luisa de Carvajal* (Oxford, 2008).

[2] "no la tenían por mujer de rrebalaciones sino de gran birtud y luz" (Convento de la Encarnación, Madrid, Proceso, f. 278v). All translations, unless otherwise noted, are mine.

[3] "si tubo o no Reuelaçiones o raptos o estassis o como los llaman…y a mi no me toca el saber ni hablar desto, si no en las solidas virtudes que en este Angel ui" (Convento de la Encarnación, Madrid, Inés's Draft Submission, f. 30).

that Luisa was far too discreet to talk about visions, a reticence confirmed by Fernando de Espinosa, a 63-year-old Jesuit who had known her in Madrid and Valladolid.[4] He reported being unable to recall "if the holy doña Luisa had said or related anything in particular about any interior gifts", though he added that she had intimated, in very general terms, that these gifts were great indeed.[5]

In light of these lukewarm remarks, we should consider why it is that we are discussing Luisa in the context of mysticism. Probably it is no more than a reflection of the normalizing process which occurs whenever we write about female religiosity in this period. Given the gigantic shadow cast by that incomparable mystic, Teresa de Ávila, both in her lifetime and over later historiography, all religious women of early modern Spain tend to be compared with her. The gradual process of rediscovering Luisa de Carvajal pulls in one direction at the same time as a Teresian counterweight drags us in another; much as we try to reclaim Luisa as a unique religious female in her own right, we are pushed towards evaluating her achievements according to ways set down for the towering figure of Santa Teresa. Luisa's story is a case study in the limits of mysticism.

Who was Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza? Born in 1566 in Extremadura, on her mother's side she was a Mendoza, "Spain's richest and most powerful family", according to Helen Nader.[6] On her father's side she came from the immensely rich Carvajal clan. Her paternal grandfather was bishop of Plasencia. Jaraicejo, the town where she was born, belonged to the bishop. Luisa was orphaned at an early age and went to live in the convent of the Descalzas Reales in Madrid with a maternal great-aunt, María Chacón, governess to Philip II's children and mother of Bernardo de Rojas, the future archbishop of Toledo and sometime Inquisitor General. Around the age of ten, when Chacón died, Luisa went to live with her mother's brother, Don Francisco Hurtado de Mendoza, third count of Monteagudo and first marquis of Almazán. When he returned to Spain after serving as an ambassador in Vienna, he coddled his niece, drawn by her intellect and perhaps

[4] Convento de la Encarnación, Madrid, Proceso, f. 200.

[5] There were technical reasons why the case for Luisa's sainthood failed, not least because around this time the papacy altered the rules for canonization. See Redworth, *The She-Apostle*, pp. 227–28.

[6] Helen Nader, ed., *Power and Gender in Renaissance Spain: Eight Women of the Mendoza Family* (Urbana and Chicago, 2004), p. x.

an orphan's compliant character; but—in a subject to which we must return—he subjected her in her early teenage years to a ritualistic and brutal regime of mortification of the flesh.

By the time she was in her 20s, Luisa had rejected both conventional ideas about marriage as well as the opportunity of becoming a professed nun. She implored her uncle to allow her to live a life of religious austerity. This clashed with the patriarchal obligation to "protect" females, who—unless they were handed over to the care of a husband or a formal house of religion—had to be watched over by male family members. In the face of her persistence, the marquis allowed her to convert the upper floor of his palatial house off the *Calle Mayor* into a sort of *beaterio* where she could live an abstemious life of prayer. When he died in December 1591, Luisa insisted on moving out. The Jesuits took pity on her, and she and a handful of servants (including Inés) went to live in the *Calle de Toledo*, an unfashionable street that lay beyond the old Arab walls.

The Society of Jesus was taking the lead role in the English Mission, a papally inspired enterprise designed to maintain England's remaining Catholics in their faith. Luisa claimed that almost as far back as she could remember, she had wanted to be a pilgrim in Protestant England, where she could offer herself up for martyrdom. We shall have to probe her motives later, but at the time it was universally accepted that anyone who died for the faith was guaranteed a place in heaven.

Despite being drawn to poverty, Luisa was potentially a wealthy heiress. The precise terms of her father's will were legally debatable, however, and she left Madrid to be near the law courts in Valladolid, where at the end of 1604 she was awarded a substantial inheritance. She promptly handed it over to the Jesuits of the English College, who used it to found a Jesuit novitiate in the Spanish Netherlands. This was the time when she was finally given permission to fulfill what had become her life's ambition. In January 1605 she set out for the Low Countries, where, at Easter, the leader of the English Jesuits, Henry Garnet, sent word to Saint Omer that she should leave at once and come secretly over to England. Her friend the abbess, Mariana de San José, simply called it "the most extraordinary journey ever undertaken by a woman".[7]

[7] "la jornada mas estraordinaria que jamas se ha visto en una muger" (Convento de la Encarnación, Madrid, Proceso, f. 590v). Luisa followed the Gregorian calendar.

The mastermind behind Luisa's pilgrimage to England, as she deemed it, was in all probability the Jesuit Michael Walpole. He was also Luisa's first biographer, and he claimed that she was permitted to travel to England in order to provide an example of a holy life and to offer sound advice, demonstrate piety, and console the afflicted.[8] Whether he expected her to accomplish anything concrete is implausible. She spoke no English and admitted that, when she had left Valladolid, her health was ruined, her chest being "utterly broken" with bronchitis. During her first six weeks in England, almost certainly in a country mansion to the north of London, she relapsed into being too ill to leave her bed.[9] When a raid forced her and her friends to flee to the anonymity of the big city, the Catholics living in the capital were reluctant to shelter her. Her presence would only attract attention from King James's anti-Catholic spies, the *pursuivants*. Garnet and Walpole had to use all their moral authority to find people who would take her in, though she ingenuously claimed that all she wanted was "a little corner, which I would pay well for, until I learnt the language".[10]

We will probably never know what was going through Walpole's mind when he conferred with the head of the English Mission at Rome, Robert Persons, about what to do with Luisa. In all likelihood, the Jesuits convinced themselves that her desire to be open to martyrdom was a God-given chance to test the peace that had been signed earlier in 1604 between England and Spain. For many, it was shameful that the Treaty of London contained no formal requirement to end the persecution of English (and, for that matter, Irish and Scottish) Catholics. Irrespective of any sense of obligation which the Jesuits may have felt to one of their most generous benefactresses, chances are that they reasoned they had nothing to lose from backing Luisa. Whatever happened to her, they would have seized the high moral ground: if she were allowed to practice her religion openly, they would reap the rewards for achieving more for their co-religionists in England than the Catholic King's diplomats had done; on the other hand, if a woman as well connected as Luisa were persecuted and thrown out

[8] For her departure, see Redworth, *The She-Apostle*, ch. 8, "The Most Extraordinary Journey," pp. 96–109.

[9] "el pecho bien ruin de catarro" (Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza, *Escritos autobiográficos*, ed. C. M. Abad [Barcelona, 1966], p. 225 [cited hereafter as *EA*]).

[10] *EA*, p. 228.

of the country, the Jesuits would still come out ahead by exposing the futility of making peace with schismatics and heretics.

To everyone's eventual astonishment (including, perhaps, her own), Luisa confounded her Jesuit masters by forging a new and active life in the poorer districts of London. Within six months of her arrival, in the aftermath of a terrorist conspiracy cooked up by a few disgruntled Catholics to blow up king and parliament, she was forced to seek refuge in what she called the "shadow of Spain" by going to live in the embassy in London's Barbican district, just outside the city walls. There she began to master the language and put down roots in her adopted country, playing a noteworthy role in the life of the embassy's chapel. A clutch of Englishwomen gathered around her; and eventually she felt able to live on her own, renting houses first near the embassy and then further afield, notably in Spitalfields, a legal peculiarity which lay in the open pasture to the north-east of London. Until her final arrest in October 1613, Luisa remained vigorous in an astonishingly wide range of activities. She imported banned books and exported English Catholics who wanted to begin life afresh in religious houses abroad. She penned eye-witness accounts of the persecution of recusants and sent them to opinion-makers in Flanders, Spain, and Rome. Through her efforts, shelter was provided for months on end to fugitive priests, and others she visited in prison as they awaited execution. She debated with Protestants and—despite her sex—was allowed to catechize new Catholics. She organized the excavation of priests' graves after they had been hanged and their bodies quartered, preserving their mortal remains as holy relics to animate the faithful and carefully writing down on the boxes the names of her new intercessors in heaven.

It is wholly understandable that Luisa is compared frequently with the most profound female mystical writer of all time, Teresa of Ávila; sometimes this comparison is even made on a line-by-line basis. For example, Luisa prepared a series of manuscript drafts describing her early life which remain, along with the bulk of her writings, in the Convent of the Encarnación in Madrid. The leading Carvajal scholar, Elizabeth Rhodes, has edited an outstanding selection of her writings, including large parts of these papers, which she names Luisa's "Spiritual Life Story". One of the episodes described in this spiritual autobiography took place in September 1577, when she and her cousin María together took their first communion in the parish church of the small town of Almazán. Luisa was 11 years old at the time and possessed of a vivid imagination. She recorded later that she had trembled as she

climbed the many steps leading to the high altar and pondered, along with her cousin, the eternity of pain and glory. In Luisa's typically wordy and exuberant style,

> For more than ten times a thousand years and twenty times a thousand there will be no hope of an end, and even that is nothing, not even many times a million. How frightful![11]

This passage has been described as "probably an echo of [Teresa's] life story", since—in the opening chapter of her autobiography—Teresa related how she and her brother had delighted in telling each other that pain and glory endured for eternity. As Teresa tersely put it,

> It used to cause us great astonishment when we were told that both pain and glory would last for ever. We would spend long periods talking about this and we liked to repeat again and again, "For ever—ever—ever!"[12]

A person as well read as Luisa probably knew Teresa's life story, as it was circulating in manuscript from the late 1560s onwards. Certainly some of the saint's printed works found their way into Luisa's uncle's extensive library. Yet the similarities between the accounts may be coincidental. The phrase *pena y gloria* seems to be a commonplace of Golden Age Spanish: it recurs in the works of Cervantes and then Quevedo. More importantly, this collocation is found in the earlier poems of Luis de Granada, whom we know Luisa admired. We know this from anecdotal evidence. When Luisa was still living with her uncle, she wrote down a list of her sins and then confessed to a Dominican instead of her usual Jesuit. The old priest refused to listen to her catalogue of errors, adding that he believed she had done nothing more than copy from Fray Luis![13] Luisa had written to Fray Luis in the 1580s, and later she twice wrote to friends—in 1603 from Valladolid and from London in 1610—asking them to send copies of his writings.[14]

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[11] "Sobre mil años diez y veinte veces mil, no ha de haber esperar fin; y aquesto viene a ser nada, ni el aumentar un millón sobre muchos. ¡Cosa espantosa!" (cited in Elizabeth Rhodes, *This Tight Embrace: Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza* [1566–1614] [Milwaukee, 2000], pp. 68–69).

[12] *The Complete Works of St Teresa of Jesus*, 3 vols in 1, ed. E. Allison Peers (New York and London, 1978). Vol. 1: *Life*, p. 11.

[13] *EA*, p. 153. M. Ann Rees kindly reminded me of this story.

[14] Incidentally, in her 178 surviving letters, Luisa mentions Saint Teresa only once. In 1611 she praised the English translation of the saint's *Vida*, which was almost certainly the work of her friend and confessor, Michael Walpole. See Luisa de Carvajal

Teresa's influence has also been detected in the "London Rule" that Luisa drew up for the women who shared her life in London. Although her companions probably never amounted to more than half a dozen at any moment, some of them remained with her for almost her entire time in England. The earliest companion we know of was Ann Garnet, who arrived about the time of the arrest and execution in early 1606 of her uncle, the Jesuit leader, Henry Garnet, for his alleged involvement in the Gunpowder Plot. Though their relationship was highly fraught—at times Luisa blamed Ann for being an uninspiring teacher of English, and later on she thought she was too frivolous to stand guard at the door of their houses—she was still with her when they were arrested late in 1613.

Despite being written in Spanish, the Rule was drawn up for Protestant London. The companions were told that their way of life was an acceptable offering to God and would assist in "the salvation of the souls of your country". An anonymous companion remembered that practice matched theory in their community, with Luisa constantly saying that they should "be very parfet that ye may appease this great wrath of God with your great virtue and holiness of life".[15] This is what Luisa thought Ana de Jesús was doing when she set up a Reformed Carmelite house in France. A close friend of Saint Teresa, Ana travelled to Paris after it had been riven by religious war between Catholics and Calvinists for the last 30 years of the 16th century. Later she moved to Flanders, where Luisa said that Ana's "six soldiers will be worth more than a seasoned regiment of Spanish soldiers".[16]

The London Rule was not so much a traditional monastic rulebook as an injunction towards a more perfect way of living. It opened with what Luisa called spiritual instruction—*instrucción espiritual*—and called for the humility before God that was necessary in order "to turn yourselves over completely to Him". Claims were made for equality among the women, but this was a conventional requirement in the reformed monastic circles of the age; there is no hiding the fact that

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y Mendoza, *Epistolario y poesías*, ed. C. M. Abad (Biblioteca de Autores Españoles) 179 (Madrid, 1965), Letter 130, p. 331 [hereafter cited as L plus number of letter]; and Kathleen T. Spinnenweber's important contribution, "The 1611 English Translation of St. Teresa's Autobiography: A Possible Carmelite-Jesuit Collaboration," *SKASE Journal of Translation and Interpretation* [online] 2 (2007): 1–12.

[15] Convento de la Encarnación, Madrid, holograph recollection.

[16] "un viejo tercio de españoles" (L73, p. 203).

Luisa saw herself as being the one in charge. She hoped divine inspiration would make up for her own inadequacies:

> Seeing, my dear sisters, that God Our Lord has brought you (so it appears) to my company, desiring to turn yourselves over completely to Him in the most religious way of life possible for you through His divine help, which I trust will make up for my faults…[17]

Though a timetable was strictly laid down in the manner of more formalized monastic statutes, one of the outstanding features of the London Rule is the emphasis on new-fangled styles of prayer. These were used to supplement the prayers of the Divine Office, the ritualized cycle of monastic prayers. Where Luisa differed from Teresa was in spelling out what her companions were to pray about. From Monday to Thursday an hour was to be spent after waking in contemplating life's end—death, judgement, hell, and glory—and on Fridays and Saturdays they were to think about the death and burial of Christ, while on Sundays they were to focus on the resurrection. Her companions were encouraged to see, in their mind's eye, Christ as a child lying in the manger or crucified (even already dead) on the cross. Luisa was drawing directly upon the practices she had learned first from her family, who had always been closely connected to the observant friars and the Jesuits. As a child Luisa had passed on what she had learned to Cousin María, who was told:

> Think about the little noises of the night and the great quiet and silence of that place, and Our Lord, amidst so much anguish, praying…[18]

Her exhortations were effective. Many years later María reminded Luisa of the words she had used to paint a verbal picture about Christ's time in the Garden of Gethsemane before he was betrayed by Judas.

It has been suggested that "a marked structural similarity" exists between Luisa's Rule and Teresa's *Constitutions* drawn up for the houses she founded or reformed. Though likenesses are evident, we should not assume she was directly modelling the London Rule on

[17] "Viendo, mis caras hermanas, que Dios Nuestro Señor os ha traído (como parece) a mi compañía, con deseos de entregaros del todo a Él en la manera de vida más religiosa que os sea posible mediante su divina asistencia, que espero suplirá mis deméritos" (Rhodes, *This Tight Embrace*, pp. 198–99).

[18] "Considérase el ruidito de la noche y la gran quietud y silencio de aquella parte, y a Nuestro Señor entre tantas angustias, orando" (Rhodes, *This Tight Embrace*, pp. 66–67).

Teresa's reforms. A closer look at the timetable for prayer elucidates this point. In both rules the day began at the first hour with *prime* and concluded with *matins*, which had come to be said last thing at night. Yet this structural similarity is not evidence of a unique dependence, as it forms part of the Divine Office (the Liturgy of the Hours). This was a daily *rota* of prayer stretching back beyond the first Benedictine rule of the 6th century to apostolic times and the Jewish hours of prayer mentioned in the New Testament.

Far from following in Teresa's footsteps, Luisa was engaged in a titanic personal struggle to find a radical alternative to Carmelite reform. This comes out in her relationship to her male confessor. Teresa wanted to ensure that, within the enclosed nunnery, female authority was paramount; and so she combined, as Alison Weber puts it, "a female magisterium with a male apostolate".[19] That is to say, she intended the mother superior to be as much of a confessor-figure as possible, and she institutionalized her authority by requiring each nun to visit her privately once a month to lay bare her soul. No such formal condition was laid down by Luisa, although—bearing in mind the limits of her mysticism—it is not surprising that her companions were encouraged to report in detail if any visions came to them in prayer. Furthermore, a Discalced Carmelite superior was given not only the right to choose a general confessor for her community, but (in order to divide and conquer the priesthood), she was also permitted to bring in extra confessors *at will*, regardless of the fact that this explicitly contravened a decree of the Council of Trent which stipulated that supplementary confessors were only to be allowed in three times a year. By defying Tridentine rules, Teresa was therefore permitting a mother superior to undermine the authority of any confessor who crossed her by bringing in a substitute. The approach adopted by Luisa in the London Rule differed radically: the spiritual superiority of male priests was incontestably upheld. Not only were Luisa's companions to reveal everything to their confessor (and in the most straightforward manner possible), but he was to be obeyed "not as a man, but as someone whom God has put before you in His place".[20]

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[19] See the fundamental article by Alison Weber, "Spiritual Administration: Gender and Discernment in the Carmelite Reform," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 31 (2000): 123–46, at p. 123.

[20] "no como a hombre, sino como a quien Dios os ha puesto en su lugar" (Rhodes, *This Tight Embrace*, pp. 200–01).

If truth be told, Luisa's conventual spirituality owes as much to a male role-model as to any female. Far from embracing post-Tridentine enclosure, where nuns were not allowed to leave their convents, she wanted her companions to go out in the world. She reminded them to wear modest attire so that English Protestants would not detect any signs of vanity. She mulled over whether the three traditional monastic vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity remained appropriate for this new way of living; but her conclusion was that her followers should not be deprived of the spiritual rewards flowing from these oaths. She could not imagine how they could lead a perfect life "with any less effective bridle than the vow of strict obedience". Where Luisa parted company from the trio of vows that lay at the heart of the whole Western tradition of monasticism was in her incorporation of an additional vow. She called it

> a fourth vow of very special obedience and reverence above and beyond that which is due from all faithful Catholics to His Holiness the Roman Pontiff Paul V and all his successors canonically elected to the apostolic seat of Saint Peter.[21]

This vow of direct papal obedience cut across 1500 years of monasticism, as the norm had always been that unmediated allegiance to an external authority should not be allowed to weaken the unquestioning obedience due to an abbot or abbess. The fourth vow was a novelty designed by Ignatius Loyola to permit his Jesuits to abandon their own communities and undertake whatever missionary tasks were required of them by the supreme pontiff.

Jesuitical influence also lay behind Luisa's choice of name for the ever-changing group of women who gathered around her. A literal translation of the Spanish title nonetheless betrays a singular debt. "The Company of the Sovereign Virgin Mary, Our Lady" is a nod in the direction of the Company of Jesus, a link not lost on Luisa's nemesis, Archbishop George Abbot of Canterbury. When he was plotting the arrest in 1613 which culminated in her death, he fulminated that

[21] "un cuarto voto de muy especial obediencia y reverencia, aliende y demás de la que es debida de los fieles católicos, a la Santidad del romano pontífice Paulo V y a todos sus sucesores, canónicamente elegidos en la apostólica silla de San Pedro" (Rhodes, *This Tight Embrace*, pp. 202–03).

she was "a Jesuitess, and so are all her disciples, in every respect as the Jesuits' women".[22]

Luisa was eternally careful to avoid any hint of criticism of the male-dominated hierarchy of the Catholic Church. However, this does not diminish the fact that she was in double rebellion against the new orthodoxy of Trent: first, by her insistence that women had no need for the high walls of a nunnery to protect them; and second, because her "extraordinary journey" had shown it was possible to lead an active religious life, even within an overwhelmingly Protestant city such as London. Given her highly personalized religiosity, Luisa had no interest in founding the sort of order which would spawn daughter houses. It would also be impossible to multiply her missionary activities, given the cryptic life she was leading in London. Yet she was far from being a marginal figure and was clearly in touch with a broad strand of discontent among religiously drawn women of the Golden Age.

The overlapping life of Mary Ward provides a helpful comparison. She is usually acclaimed as being the inspiration behind the first order of women to emulate the Jesuits. Around 1611, in a house in the bustling London thoroughfare of the Strand, she founded what became the *Institute of the Blessed Virgin*, whose members sooner or later would promise special obedience to the papacy (which nonetheless did not prevent them from quickly being forced to compromise their role in the community by accepting the less socially challenging role of a teaching order). Mary Ward was 20 years Luisa's junior, and it is hard to tell how much she was influenced by the older woman; but there are hints of a strong, if ill-documented, connection. She later said her aunt had lodged with Luisa. In addition, in the mid-1620s a cardinal in Rome remembered "María de la Guardia's" lavish praise for Luisa. At the time of Luisa's final arrest, there were unfounded rumors that she might abandon the dangers of London and take over a house Mary Ward had founded in Saint Omer.[23] Playful speculation aside about who might properly be called the first Jesuitess in England, what is important is that both these women were united in a struggle

[22] For Abbot's terminology, see Redworth, *The She-Apostle,* p. 220.

[23] See Convento de la Encarnación, Madrid, Proceso, ff. 546 and 548v, which includes a letter from Cardinal de Trejo dated Rome 1627. H. Peters, *Mary Ward: A World in Contemplation*, trans. H. Butterworth (Leominster, 1994) is the best modern biography of this figure.

to challenge patriarchal assumptions that female religious were best confined to strict enclosure.

An aspect of Luisa's London Rule which goes to the heart of her spirituality is the sustained emphasis on martyrdom. The opening section ends with an invocation that the community's chosen "path might lead to a violent and fortunate death". It has been demonstrated that between 1254 and 1481, "popes canonized not a single person who had died a violent death"; but Luisa was born into the first great age of martyrdom since the persecutions unleashed by the ancient emperors of Rome.[24] The Golden Age coincided with the European Reformation, when both Catholics and Protestants were forced to choose between their lives and their beliefs. It was also the first age of European expansion, when missionaries repeatedly put their lives at risk in pagan territories. The cult of ancient martyrs was enormously boosted in 1584, when Luisa was 18 years old, with a papal decree requiring that the revised *Roman Martyrology* should henceforth form part of daily liturgical life. A saint or martyr was assigned to each day for millenia to come, and it was confidently believed that those who died for the faith flew immediately to heaven, thus avoiding the permanent torment of hell or the transitory agonies of purgatory. Luisa held that martyrdom was so efficacious that it created "instant saints", without any need for sanctification by the church. In her account of the death of a priest who was executed during her last few years in London, she pointed out that her manservant and chaperone had provided a clean cloth to cover the martyr's eyes, which then "looked in a trice on God with no blindfold". She believed that the killing in 1606 of Henry Garnet—the Jesuit leader who had greeted her on her arrival in England—had sent him directly to heaven, where he was instantaneously able to intercede with the Almighty for those left behind on earth.[25] If further proof were needed, she explicitly said of two martyrs whose remains had been dug up and brought to her house to be turned into relics: "[t]hey flew up to heaven, where they increased the number of intercessors".[26]

Luisa had long hankered after martyrdom. Though it was at the relatively late age of 32 that she had formally vowed to "seek out, as far as is possible, all those opportunities of martyrdom", promising

[24] Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999), p. 30.
[25] L87, p. 229.
[26] L125, p. 324.

to "face all manner of death, torments, and rigors", this was but the formulation of a desire which stretched back to her adolescence.[27] Her companion Isabel believed her yearning for martyrdom was already evident in her poetry, singling out the poem "Sweet Manacles", which she said was written 12 years before Luisa left for England (that is, around 1592). As we shall see, in it she says a holocaust of 1,000 flames would be a "fortunate fate".[28]

Luisa is the lost poet of the Golden Age. She left behind 50 poems, all but two of which were published within 20 years of her death. Their strength is perhaps also their weakness. Being so intensely personal, some readers find them almost too painful to read. For this reason an unsympathetic critic might say her poems lack universal appeal, whereas for others this is precisely why they are able to appreciate a uniquely agonized voice. Time and again she expresses the desolation of a religious person who finds little meaning in life. Two intertwined themes recur. The first is the excruciating pain that stems from the "almost perpetual absence" of the divine.[29] The second is the conviction that she can only repay God's redemptive suffering by being willing herself to suffer, to the point of her own annihilation. In the poem "Mother, when I was little", she describes how Christ has stolen her will and left her captive with chains of gold. She is now His slave, ready to do His bidding. At first, she had not felt His fire,

> Although it burnt me;
> now I am older,
> I feel it perfectly well,
> for the jest and the game
> turned out to be in earnest![30]

It is this "earnestness" which culminated in her "extraordinary journey" to England.

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[27] "procuraré, cuanto me sea posible, buscar todas aquellas ocasiones de martirio…haré rostro a todo género de muerte, tormentos y riguridad" (Rhodes, *This Tight Embrace*, pp. 118–19).

[28] For an alternative view of Luisa's poetry, see Gwyn Fox's important book, *Subtle Subversions: Reading Golden Age Sonnets by Iberian Women* (Georgetown, 2008).

[29] "perpetuas ausencias" (Rhodes, *This Tight Embrace,* p. 132). This collection contains the texts of Luisa's poems cited here. I acknowledge an ongoing debt to Elizabeth Rhodes's sensitive translations.

[30] "Madre, siendo niña / me prendió el Amor; / con cadenas de oro / presa me dejó" (Rhodes, *This Tight Embrace*, pp. 172–73).

Reiterated references are made in Luisa's poems to pain and instruments of suffering, including such disturbing items as nooses, manacles, and chains. It is possible to treat these in terms of poetic license, as they are literary commonplaces of the day. We know that Luisa avidly read contemporary poetry, especially that of John of the Cross, Teresa of Ávila's indispensable helper in Carmelite reform. Saint John died in 1591; and although his poems were not published until after Luisa's death, she possessed copies in manuscript. From London she asked Inés de la Asunción to send "the poems that are in the book I left with you of Friar John of the Cross", naming three, including "En una noche oscura".[31] Like Saint John, Luisa contemplated the tormented state of her soul through the genre of pastoral. In a number of poems, she wrote about herself as a shepherdess called—in a rearrangement of the letters of her baptismal name—*Silva*, who is searching for Christ the Good Shepherd.

As Colin Thompson notes, there was a "vogue for 'divinizing' poetry" in Spain at this time.[32] Where Luisa ventures into new pastures is in the visceral ferocity of her yearning for spiritual love. Her pastorals are often anything but bucolic, as is clear from her spiritual ballad "On a harsh journey", which was written when she lay ill in Madrid in 1593. In it she describes her *alter ego s*earching for her God-Lover, her soul wounded by love on a rugged, bramble-strewn mountain where *fieras* or wild beasts howled.[33] The ocean can even represent nature as a place of torment when, in another poem, she talks of Silva's "spirited breast" (*pecho animoso*) throwing itself into the sea only to discover that its "fierce waves" (*olas bravas*) cannot match the dolorous agitation of her heart.[34]

The eminent literary scholar Anne J. Cruz has suggested that "while spiritually moving, Carvajal's metaphysical conceits and intense images of physical pain are often disquieting to modern sensibilities".[35] The

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[31] L91, p. 235.

[32] Colin Thompson, *The Strife of Tongues: Fray Luis de Léon and the Golden Age of Spain* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 244.

[33] There is considerable overlap between the lexicon Luisa adopts in her poetry and her secular language, be it in private letters or more formally in her religious vows. The use of "wild beasts" as referring to English Protestants is but one example.

[34] Rhodes, *This Tight Embrace*, pp. 168–71.

[35] See Anne J. Cruz's fundamental article, "Chains of Desire: Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza's Poetics of Penance," in *Estudios sobre escritoras hispánicas en honor de Georgina Sabat-Rivers*, ed. L. Charnon-Deutsch (Madrid, 1992), pp. 97–112, at p. 98.

limitation on classifying her poems as mystical is precisely because they are so clearly biographical, being profoundly and disconcertingly rooted in doubts about her self-worth. She has no assumed persona or narrative voice. She talks directly to us. Luisa glossed her poem "Sweet Manacles", stating that it dealt with "a most enflamed love and desires for martyrdom" (*de amor encendidísimo y deseos de martirio*). It starts:

> Sweet manacles, coveted noose,
> trials now gone, victorious hour,
> delightful and glorious infamy,
> holocaust burnt in a thousand flames.[36]

It culminates with the hope that her life would become unbound (*desatada*) to pure love, which could only mean that she—one and the same with the "she" of the poem—would be free to embrace death.

To see how much poetical strength Luisa draws from personal experience, we can compare this to a similar poem by Saint Teresa titled "Henceforth I'll joy in wretchedness", composed for the veiling of Sister Isabel de los Ángeles. The point for us is not whether Luisa knew this poem, but to demonstrate how the two women differed when dealing with suffering and death. Teresa's approach to "wretchedness" is constructive. Sor Isabel's riches will lie in poverty; from loss she will draw profit; dishonor will weave her the laurel crown of pain. This female Doctor of the Church turns suffering into encouragement and, by doing so, directs her universal message to the feebler soul. Her poem ends with an emphasis not on pain itself but on the absolute delight that it releases. To imitate Christ's suffering is pure joy. The final stanza gloriously asserts that:

> From Him I draw my constancy
> In Him for ever I'm secure
> He is Eternal Truth most sure
> His is the pattern-life for me![37]

For Michel de Certeau, mysticism was "a manner of speaking". He invited us to view it as a way of talking about religion without recourse

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[36] "Esposas dulces, lazo deseado / ausentes trances, hora victoriosa, / infamia felicísima y gloriosa, / holocausto en mil llamas abrasado" (Rhodes, *This Tight Embrace*, pp. 180–81).

[37] "Sea mi gozo en el llanto"; "Aquí estriba mi firmeza / Aquí mi seguridad / La prueba de mi verdad / La muestra de mi firmeza" (*Complete Works of St Teresa*, 3: 307).

to the antiseptic language of theology. But a mystic is also someone who knowingly performs as such. It has to be a self-conscious act. If the first constraint on emphazing Luisa's mystical qualities is her reluctance to talk about her spiritual talents, a further limitation is that we know so much about her early life. The label of mystic fits most easily when such ineffable gifts seem to be conjured up out of nowhere. In other words, the fewer biographical details we have about religious figures, the easier it is for modern commentators to define them as "mystical". Then there is simply no possibility of peeping behind the curtain.

In contrast, Luisa's early life is known to us in exceptional detail. Much of this information comes from the spiritual life story she crafted, possibly to demonstrate to her Jesuit confessors her obedience to the male-dominated church hierarchy (and thus, her suitability to proceed to England). Though her reminiscences end with her leaving the Low Countries, the book remains one of the most intimate of feminine spiritual autobiographies. Along with her letters, it formed the basis of the *Life* drawn up by her confessor and friend, Michael Walpole, which first appeared in a printed version brought out by Luis Muñoz in 1632 (when many were still alive who had known her well). To use Kathleen A. Myers's helpful term, both were "rescripted" accounts, yet each remained remarkably faithful to Luisa's original words.[38]

Few would object to the statement that every piece of writing is constructed with an end in mind, and a spiritual autobiography is an obvious example of subjectively constructed self-fashioning. Yet it is easy to overlook that such lives can simultaneously be autobiographical (or "accurate") accounts, as well as written to impress. In the last 25 years we have seen remarkable advances in our appreciation of how such lives were held together by certain formulae, with familiar tropes recurring in many; what has yet to be appreciated is that, within these structures, there is ample space to craft an individualized life story. A 19th-century symphony might follow sonata form, but do Haydn and Beethoven sound like Bruckner and Brahms?

Luisa's memoirs are fundamentally reliable, or at least impossible to challenge. She prefaces details about her earliest years, when she was too young to remember herself, with cautionary remarks to the effect

[38] K. A. Myers, *Neither Saints nor Sinners: Writing the Lives of Women in Spanish America* (Oxford, 2003).

of, "as I was told". Furthermore, her uncle's disturbing proclivities provide us with an opportunity to gauge the essential veracity of Luisa's account. It is time to look in more detail at what she suffered by her uncle's command.

After the Marquis of Almazán's return from his tour of duty as ambassador to Vienna, he subjected Luisa to a revolting series of penitences. Strictly speaking, her uncle did not inflict the mortifications himself but secretly ordered specially chosen female servants to bind and whip her, ostensibly in imitation of the scourging of Christ. In horrendous detail, we are told she was subjected to verbal as well as physical abuse. Such was her uncle's desire to control that he would lock her up while he went out on the king's business or deny her permission to relieve herself. The basic truth of Luisa's account is supported by Inés de la Asunción, who said the uncle's practices "heçedian a todos los limites de la rraçon"—they exceeded the bounds of reason.[39] Of course, the overly sceptical might argue she was only parroting what Luisa had told her; however, we are lucky to know independently that the marquis's eldest daughter believed her father's penitential practices were extreme. She admitted these had driven her mother to distraction.[40]

The limiting nature of Luisa's memoirs does not lie in their degree of accuracy or inaccuracy, however; rather, the sheer abundance of biographical detail exposes the inadequacies and simplifications involved in delimiting her—or anyone?—as a mystic. The profoundly moving themes of her poetry need to be interrogated as an example of a fractured childhood as much as an unmediated religious experience. This raises the question of how appropriate it is to apply such a reverential term as "mystical" to feelings which—in the well-documented case of Luisa—are connected with loss and degradation.

A way out of this ontological mire is offered by the work of Brad S. Gregory, who argues powerfully that "circular arguments—for example, that the willingness to die was a function of neuroses that expressed themselves in the martyrs' willingness to die—explain nothing." If our aim "is to understand these people rather than to judge them…Not to take such people on their own terms fails utterly to

[39] Convento de la Encarnación, Madrid, Proceso, f. 267v.

[40] She naturally remained convinced of her father's piety; see Redworth, *The She-Apostle*, p. 29.

comprehend them, the character of their actions, and the basis of their lives."[41] Applying this approach to Luisa's convictions, she never publicly doubted that her God-fearing uncle's concern had been to make her stronger in the faith. His crucifix remained one of her most cherished possessions; and in 1598, when she parted with her belongings, she said of the portrait of her uncle that she could not bear to part with it because he remained in her heart and was her heavenly intercessor.[42] In sum, what is remarkable about Luisa's childhood pain—which her poetry transformed into a song of praise for martyrdom—is that it did not limit her desire to lead an active life in the world.

There are a multiplicity of ways to look at Luisa's writings. Already we have seen how her spiritual autobiography has been analysed in the light of Saint Teresa's celebrated *Life*. A different approach has been adopted by Christine M. Cloud, who—in her important doctoral thesis written in 2006—reminds us that Luisa's spiritual memoirs should be viewed as a form of autobiography, since they were related to "lived bodily experiences". Cloud argues that the memoirs were nevertheless constructed as "trauma narrative" (that is, writing dealing with specific painful episodes). Cloud's reasoning is that the longest group of her autobiographical accounts laid out, in much the same way as other hagiographical lives, a self-conscious construction of the life story of a "saint-in-the-making"; yet, when Luisa came to confront the horrors of what her uncle did to her, hagiographical conventionalities no longer sufficed. When her text "deviates from these genres it moves towards a trauma narrative that is characterized primarily by narrative gaps and fissures that both symbolize and speak to its author's traumatized and splintered state".[43] These "gaps and fissures" refer to the fact that, when Luisa's narrative reaches her adolescence, we are confronted with a series of rewritings and drafts which might indicate that she found it particularly disturbing to write about what had been done to her. She might heap praise on the marquis, but she did not stint when it came to describing the agonies her uncle had caused her.

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[41] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, pp. 100, 10.

[42] L1, p. 98.

[43] Christine M. Cloud, *Embodied Authority in the Spiritual Autobiographies of Four Early Modern Women from Spain and Mexico* (Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 2006), p. 273; cf. the important comments on the drafts in Rhodes, *This Tight Embrace*, p. 31.

To avoid the unspoken assumption that these "highly constructed" texts cannot also be relatively straightforward accounts of the writer's life, we would need to know more about how Luisa composed her narrative. This testing can only be done here on a very limited level; but regarding the multiple drafts we have of the account of her uncle's treatment, the passages concerning her very earliest years seem to have survived in a clean copy. It is impossible to tell whether or not she redrafted the earlier passages just as much. Moreover, not all the marginal additions deal with mortification or similarly painful experiences. One emendation refers to a fight with a cousin who was jealous of her prettiness, in particular her fine figure. In another, Luisa adds that her difficulty in recognizing faces had nothing to do with poor eyesight, "since Our Lord gave me remarkably good vision".[44]

Excessive mortification ceased to be central to Luisa's inner spirituality (or so it is said) when she carved out for herself an active life in London and was thus "able to vent her considerable energies in more positive directions than in flagellating herself".[45] In fact, the London Rule prescribed mortification on three days a week and almost every night in Lent. Perhaps significantly, Luisa ordered her companions to retire to do this alone.[46] More revelatory is an undated letter sent to Luisa when she had at least five women living with her in which the Jesuit John Blackfan announced that, whereas he was sending her a little rosary,

> for Mistress Frances I sent yesterday a thick whip which I made myself. Today I'm sending three more, the thickest for Anna, the one with the white thread for Mistress Ann, the one with cords for Joanna, and I will send Helena the first one that I finish.[47]

Contrary to received opinion, we see that mortification was an important part of her spiritual life after reaching England, even if we have little record of what these practices may have released in terms of her

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[44] "no por falta de vista, que me la dio Nuestro Señor notablemente buena" (Rhodes, *This Tight Embrace*, pp. 66, 72).

[45] Elizabeth Rhodes, "Join the Jesuits, See the World: Early Modern Women in Spain and the Society of Jesus," in *The Jesuits*, Vol. 2: *Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts 1540–1773*, ed. John W. O'Malley et al. (Toronto, 2006), pp. 33–49, at p. 45.

[46] Rhodes, *This Tight Embrace,* p. 219.

[47] "a M[istr]is francis ynbie ayer una disciplina grosera de mi propria hechura / aora ymbio otras tres la mas grossera para Anna, la de hilo blanco para M.is Ann[*e* crossed out]. la de cuerdas para Juana, para Helena ymbiere la primera que hiziere" (Convento de la Encarnación, Madrid, undated letter, Blackfan to Luisa).

inner religiosity. The historical performance of mysticism requires that these experiences be recorded in one way or another.

Luisa's greatest claim to be labelled a mystic comes from the dozen or more brief, sometimes fragmentary, accounts she composed mainly in the 1590s. As in her poems, she normally described intense feelings about alienation from the divine or how the divine presence made her feel so grateful that only martyrdom would be adequate recompense. A short memorial, just a few hundred words long, relates the intensity of her feelings of love for God. She claimed her passion inspired a lively desire to die for Him "amidst a thousand martyrdoms. For me there is no other happiness nor any other glory".[48]

These profound experiences centered on the adoration of the Eucharist. She attended mass every day in Madrid, at first communicating only twice a week. Eventually a sympathetic confessor agreed to support her wish to take the consecrated bread on a daily basis. (At this time the laity were not offered the chalice, with the consecrated wine being almost invariably held back for the priests.) According to what she wrote in an autobiographical piece describing her spiritual journey of the 1590s, she felt certain that the Person of the Word Made Flesh—that is, Christ—was embossed on her soul, and that this experience "has always been growing, and never diminishing".[49] Sometimes this sensation was so overwhelming that she could isolate individual days when it happened, one being a certain Friday, 12 February, most likely in 1599. After consuming the bread she again saw the Word Incarnate, this time enduring the Passion, with hands agonizingly run through with nails and with the conspicuous head wounds of a crown of thorns. She was at that time reading Saint Augustine's *Meditations*, wrongly ascribed to Augustine of Hippo but in fact the work of a less gifted medieval writer. The *Meditations* tried to describe everlasting life, but Luisa found them unstimulating and fell back on the imaginative prayer with which she had inspired Cousin María. She imagined that she was at one with Christ, enduring in her mind the same thorns and nails. Her impulse was to ask: what other glory could there be but to share in His torments and humiliation? Far from being repulsed by pain, her overwhelming sensation was of "gently penetrating and all-consuming love".[50]

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[48] "mil martirios. Y para mí no hay otra felicidad ni otra gloria" (*EA*, p. 289).
[49] *EA*, p. 220.
[50] *EA*, p. 286.

These mystical writings were never longer than a few sheets of paper and were not prepared for a wider audience. Her confessors doubtless saw them, but there is less evidence to suggest that they circulated among her friends (as her poetry did). Her prose imagery could be described as unexceptional, lacking perhaps the directness of the great mystics. There is something of the midnight oil about her prose writing, despite its remaining highly conventional. For instance, God's love is compared with a place, a traditional Christian metaphor going back to the New Testament saying that "in my Father's house there are many mansions" (an idea which was also taken up in the *City of God* by the real Saint Augustine). Though this idea was made famous through Saint Teresa's use of it in her *Interior Castle*, it is also commonly found in spiritual writings Luisa already knew.[51] In her recasting of this well-worn idea, her reaction to God's mercies was as if she were entering

> palaces of divine love, built in conformity with the instructions of God's will, and where, in this position, the deepest and straightest of foundations are put down. Considering the fastness and beauty of this place, I lifted the eyes of my soul and looked around, only to find immense heights and depressions, wide spaces and plains that cannot be comprehended, full of the richest mines of precious stones and the finest gold and the purest silver, which seven times was tested in the crucible of tribulation, and even when most accurately assayed it always retains the same value.[52]

One of the spiritual advisors to whom she was closest on the eve of her departure from Valladolid for England was the distinguished writer Luis de la Puente. He reluctantly found himself unable to do anything other than support her desire to be a martyr. Though we do not know what he thought of her writings—presuming he was acquainted with them at all—there is a temptation to think he may have thought the same of Luisa as he did of her close friend in Valladolid, the *beata* Marina de Escobar, of whom he said that "really her style is wordy and sloppy; she repeats something several times in order to make herself understood, and with too many words".[53]

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[51] The best place to begin is the excellent article by J. F. Chorpenning, "The Pleasance, Paradise, and Heaven: Renaissance Cosmology and Imagery in the *Castillo Interior*," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 27 (1991): 138–47.

[52] *EA*, p. 216.

[53] "realmente, tiene estilo derramado, y prolijo; repite una cosa muchas veces, para darse a entender, y con palabras demasiadas" (Luis de la Puente, *Vida y escritos del V.*

The way Luisa's life as a missionary unfolded, along with the incomplete nature of her writings, suggests that she did not believe God's purpose was for her to enact the role of a mystic. According to her Jesuit friend Espinosa, she elected to destroy her commentary on the Song of Songs.[54] This does not mean she thought her literary output had no merit; as we have seen, she believed her verse worthy of elucidation. This is evidenced not only by the explanatory introductions she supplied for various poems, but also by her intertextual references, where she refers back to what she had previously written.

Religious figures of Spain's Golden Age were all affected by the phenomenon we have come to term "mysticism". For women primarily, it provided a mode of expression that avoided challenging the male monopoly on theological writing. The historical record each religious figure has left behind will invariably contain something of a mystical nature. But a mystic must want to be seen as such, which is why there are limitations to how rightfully we can describe Luisa de Carvajal—and perhaps many others—as a mystic. In her London Rule, she advised her female companions to ask God "to make you hear His voice and Eternal Word which in all things created by Him and in Himself is speaking to us", yet she also warned them about the dangers "from illusions in prayer and outside of it".[55]

Luisa's most profound spiritual experiences are best understood as a means of explaining to herself (and to anyone who needed to know) the pain she felt after her extraordinary upbringing. She has left us no truly didactic mystical text. To an overwhelming extent her most heartfelt religious writings, in both prose and verse, belong to the period before she had settled down to her adventurous life in London. The sole exception of any significance is a description, a few hundred words long, which she drew up in 1611 or shortly after. Written, it must be admitted, in the guise of a letter to Espinosa, she described a fever which had almost killed her. In one section of this epistolary account she claimed that the Devil had asked her if she was prepared to suffer such pain for evermore if that were God's will. Her reply was

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P. Luis de la Puente de la Compañía de Jesús [1554–1624], ed. C. M. Abad [Comillas, 1957], p. 436).

[54] *EA*, p. 311.

[55] "os haga oír su voz y eterno Verbo que en todas las cosas por Él criadas nos está hablando y en sí mismo"; "de ilusiones en la oración y fuera de ella" (Rhodes, *This Tight Embrace*, p. 206).

she could not wish for anything else, nor did she. Whether or not this late memoir of illness is an example of mystical writing—and in the passing references to the Devil, he appears to represent the absence of reason as much as evil personified—once Luisa had found her true worth in an active life as a missionary, it was only rarely that she felt the need to put such experiences down on paper.[56] If this is so, then her apparently mystical writings of the 1590s become mere stopping-off points on the route to a new way of living.

Given the fullness of her life story, it is impossible to encapsulate Luisa in a single word. In those brief periods when the barely supportable pain of her youthful years was lifted from her, she experienced moments of euphoria which she attempted to describe on paper, even if these exercises implied no obvious message for anyone else. If not mysticism in a conventional sense, she nonetheless experienced moments of fleeting ecstasy amidst the darkness. To go back to where we began, we should recall that Inés de la Asunción was unwilling to characterize her mistress as someone particularly given to mystical experiences. Surely it would be by her active life that Luisa would wish to be remembered. No matter how highly we regard her prose writing, or are moved by the internal anguish expressed in her poems, nothing can alter the fact that Luisa de Carvajal led one of the Golden Age's more extraordinary public lives.

[56] *EA*, pp. 278–81. Cf. "En este tiempo, que el demonio, como yo pienso, vio que con dificultad podía ayudarme del discurso de mi entendimiento" (L134, p. 280).

FROM SAINT TO SINNER: SIXTEENTH-CENTURY PERCEPTIONS OF "LA MONJA DE LISBOA"

Freddy Domínguez

I

In a book about marginal figures in the early modern Iberian world, noted scholar Fernando Bouza briefly mentions a mid-16th-century sleeping nun. He tells us she was placed on display at the Royal Palace in Lisbon where flocks of courtiers came to gaze at her, though it is unclear whether they did so for spiritual edification or out of mere curiosity. There had always been a confluence between the holy and the marvelous, and Bouza tells us many of the traits associated with saintliness "seemed to have been taken out of the repertory of natural curiosities" which so fascinated contemporaries.[1] Religious figures were not unlike a whole spectrum of natural phenomena from shooting stars to comets. In a world which firmly believed that God's providential hand was readily visible on earth, the extraordinary was not only looked upon with ambivalent fascination, but also read as indicative of divine will. Potentially venerable figures such as a sleeping nun did not simply exist, but were meant to be understood and deciphered.

Understanding, however, was not easy, in part because there had always been a fine line dividing the sacred and the profane. If mystics, ascetics, and various other religious types claiming to have special relationships with Christ had long been deemed suspicious by religious authorities, post-Reformation confessional battles only exacerbated this sentiment. While the Catholic Church was eager to highlight the importance of saints, the veracity of miracles, and the possibility of a mystical union with God, it was often skeptical of those who claimed to have achieved spiritual exaltation. Individual religious experiences without the mediation of priests were often deemed redolent of heresy. Worse still, mystical experiences, far from being divine gifts, could also be seen as demonic tricks. Not surprisingly, such holy personages

[1] F. Bouza and J. L. Beltrán, *Enanos, bufones, monstruos y hechiceros* (Madrid, 2005), p. 38.

as Ignatius of Loyola and Teresa of Ávila were subject to examination by the Inquisition. For every saint, there were many more deemed heretics or frauds.

Among those the church considered frauds numbered another nun, María, whose presumptions to holiness made her a celebrity across Catholic Europe. Sor María da Visitação (known in the Spanish world as María de la Visitación or the Monja de Lisboa) was born in 1551 to parents of noble lineage. As a child, she entered the Lisbon convent of the Anunciada in 1562 and became a professed nun in 1567. She was known for her deep trances and direct communication with Christ, which eventually led to her acquiring wounds such as might have been made by a crown of thorns. These appeared around 1575, and, by 1584, she manifested the stigmata. She eventually gained notoriety for her power to heal the sick and was taken seriously when she began to share her (often stark) forebodings about the fate of the Spanish empire. While many in Lisbon—clerics, courtiers, and laymen alike—looked favorably upon the nun, many others inside and outside the convent began to have doubts. Philip II of Spain (who was then also king of Portugal) initially looked kindly upon her. But as she became a focus of controversy and the Inquisition began to question her presumed saintliness, the king turned suspicious. María eventually confessed to having fabricated her experiences, and Philip later concluded that a woman who got herself caught up in political affairs "cannot be a real saint."[2]

Though the basic outlines of María's story occurred across European convents,[3] her case is of particular import because of its immense notoriety. The story of her rise and ultimate fall is one of negotiation and manipulation by María, her fellow nuns, and the church hierarchy. Whether or not she actually experienced the ecstasies which made her famous, there is little doubt that she actively (if perhaps hesitantly) propagated them to her superiors and the public at large. In exchange, her superiors no doubt played a role in both how she went about telling her stories and, more importantly, how María's image was confected for the rest of the Catholic world.

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[2] Quoted in Álvaro Huerga, "La vida seudomística y el proceso inquisitorial de Sor María de la Visitación," *Hispania sacra* 12 (1959): 35–130, at p. 63.

[3] See, for example, Judith Brown, *Immodest Acts: The Life of a Lesbian Nun in Renaissance Italy* (New York, 1986).

In recent years, María has typically been relegated to little more than a side-note, a mere example of the many purported mystics populating 16th- and 17th-century Iberia. Her name is familiar to students of the period, but few have devoted attention to her case.[4] This fact has had the deleterious effect of undermining María's importance as a political and religious figure and obscuring the fact that she was part of important debates (inside and outside the Catholic Church) in the late 16th century and after. In a society which very much believed in the possibility of the miraculous, María posed both a problem and an opportunity for those seeking to examine the virtues and the liabilities of contemporary holy women. At present, my aim is to explore this theme by offering a schematic assessment of how various men, mostly clerics, used María's story. My aim is not so much to offer a detailed narrative of María's life. Instead, by surveying what was written about her at the peak of her fame and immediately after her fall, I will explain how her case resonated in broader discussions on the nature of mystical experiences. I will also show how her case was used as polemical ammunition by contemporaries.

II

It is unclear how long María's spiritual achievements remained hidden within the walls of her convent, but it was probably not long. Interaction between nuns and the outside world, though regulated, was nevertheless regular. María's story could have thus passed through the city's channels of news and rumor. The extent of her notoriety, however, was facilitated by her male clerical superiors—her confessor and a series of important members of the Dominican hierarchy—who legitimized her role as a "saint". Particularly in the years after the Council of Trent, clerics were to approach such female mystics with the utmost skepticism. In theory, only after rigorous testing by the

[4] At present the most astute work on María's life and inquisitorial trial remains Huerga, "La vida seudomística". See also Ramón Robres Lluch and José Ramón Órtola, "La monja de Lisboa; sus fingidos estigmas; Fray Luis de Granada y el Patriarca Ribera," *Boletín de la Sociedad Castellonensa de Cultura* 23 (1947): 182–214, 230–78; and María Echaniz Sans, "El cuerpo femenino como encarnación de Cristo: María de la Visitación, la monja de Lisboa," *Revista d'etudis feminstes* 9 (1995): 27–45. For a stylized literary narrative in Portuguese, see Agustina Bessa-Luis, *A monja de Lisboa* (Lisbon, 1985).

most learned and virtuous men could holiness be accepted and propagated to the church's flock. Initially many of the most respected men in Portugal supported María; they approved of her election as prioress in 1583 and were awed by the appearance of her stigmata scarcely a year later.

The most important clerical and political figure in Portugal, Cardinal Archduke Albert, was among the first to place an official stamp of approval on María, sending an account of her activities to Rome in 1584. In the report, apart from basic biographical data, her worthiness as a spiritual figure was established. She had carried out all her religious duties to perfection and had been an example of piety for her fellow nuns. The miraculous scars etched on her skin were deemed genuine. The report was quick to highlight the fact that apart from complying with her spiritual duties, she had always been "obedient, with very profound humility". She was thought to be merciful and charitable "and in her mode of speaking affable", demonstrating "Christian simplicity". Although she had acquired a following, María had not been adversely affected. Her spirit remained pristine, with her fervor for a devout life far from worldly temptations in no way diminished. The report revealed that as a sign of her spiritual acuity, she was wont to sleep with a life-size cross she called her "bride", and that she spent countless hours in prayer.[5] These prayers in turn led to trances, raptures, and ecstasies out of which no human voice could awaken her.

The report went on to list the bodily signs of holiness she manifested: her bleeding scalp, the stigmata, and even a wound near her heart given to her by Christ after receiving the Eucharist. He had appeared before her and emitted a ray of red light from the wound on his side which

[5] "Porque demás de ser su regimiento grande y sus costumbres inreprehensibles, ha sido siempre muy pronta en la obidiencia con humildad muy profunda, dando en las obras exteriores manifiestos testimonios de estas virtudes…Con los prójimos siempre ha mostrado aventajadamente llena de caridad y misericordia, y así su conversación es afable y benigna, compasiva, con muy grande candor y muestra de simplicidad cristiana y de muy blanda condición…Entre las particulares devociones que ha continuado consigo siempre en el recogimiento de su celda es una haber tenido consigo siempre una cruz grande, del tamaño de su estatura, a quien llama su 'esposa' con la cual ha dormido siempre abrazada" (Álvaro Huerga, ed., *Fray Luis de Granada: obras completas*, 44 vols [Madrid, 1998], 17: 40). Hereafter cited as Luis de Granada, *Obras completas*.

pierced her heart.[6] María was also reputed—and this was attested to by many honorable people—to have performed miracles, most importantly the healing of the sick. The report ends by making the significant assertion that María herself was disturbed by the attention she had been receiving and the extent to which her spiritual gifts had been divulged, "vehemently asking that she be taken where no one would know her and where she could live hidden."[7] From the very beginning, clerics like the Dominican Provincial Antonio de la Cerda were intent on underlining the fact that María herself was wary of her mystical experiences; she was said to have become "suspicious of herself", but ever more trusting of Christ.[8] María's humility—her apparent distaste for fame—along with her ascetic habits (both seen as necessary markers of female piety) seemed to rebuke any claims of fraud.

Though generally laudatory, the report demonstrates some restraint. Albert claimed that, out of prudence, he left out much of what could have been recounted. Many of María's ecstatic experiences, though they had already leaked out to the public, were thought to be best left aside "because perhaps it is not an opportune time to reveal them". Such stories bore a strong resemblance to those about Saint Catherine of Siena, Saint Gertrude, and other holy women.[9] This may have been a rhetorical gimmick to differentiate María from the established canon of holy women who preceded her, serving to demarcate a boundary between the pious and the saintly, a state of being that could only be determined by the Holy See.

Others were less interested in drawing such a clear line. As with most official pronouncements, the Cardinal's report was enunciating a narrative that had been in the making for nearly a decade since

[6] "salía del costado de Cristo un rayo colorado de grande resplandor, descendiendo con gran fuerza, le hirío el corazón y le quedó una señal de que a los viernes echa sangre" (Luis de Granada, *Obras completas*, 17: 42).

[7] "y ella ha mostrado muy grande sentimiento y desconsuelo de obligalla la obediencia del superior a referir lo que le ha dicho y de que le había mandado mostrar las manos a muchas personas que las han visto, pesándole juntamente de la fama que entiende haberse divulgado de estas cosas y deseando y pidiendo con mucha instancia que la llevasen a donde no la conociesen y pudiera vivir escondida" (Luis de Granada, *Obras completas*, 17: 45).

[8] "le concedió una gran desconfianaza de sí y confianza grandísima en el mismo Señor" ("Relación del padre Provincial fray Antonio de la Cerda," in Huerga, "La vida seudomística," p. 78).

[9] "porque por ventura no era tiempo oportuno para publicarse" (Luis de Granada, *Obras completas*, 17: 43).

María's first mystical experiences. It was written using the testimony of those who had observed her trances, those who had experienced her miracles, the clerics who had long believed there was something special about the young woman, and María herself. There is reason to believe that one man played a particularly important role in propelling María beyond Lisbon and its environs: the famed cleric and "best-selling" author of spiritual books, Fray Luis de Granada.[10] Not only was he a popular author across Catholic Europe; but since his arrival in 1555, he had been firmly entrenched in Portugal's clerical hierarchy, having once been a provincial, and having maintained close ties to the Spanish crown and court in Lisbon. Not surprisingly, since María's was a Dominican convent, Granada had been a very close witness to her rise both within the convent where she became abbess and among the population at large. He had seen her bleeding wounds, he had observed her ascetic lifestyle, and he was inspired by her humility. Moreover, the Iberian landscape was filled with saintly men and women, making María's story far from implausible. Granada felt no qualms about being swept up in this craze over the holy nun; indeed, he thought it important to make sure her story was well known. As we shall see, he believed—and more importantly, wanted others to believe—that María had been graced by all the attributes of saintliness and was meant to be a beacon for a Christendom then being afflicted by the ravages of heresy.

Evidence of Granada's support for María remains in various documents forming part of what seems to have been a concerted print and manuscript campaign in her favor. Convinced of María's virtue, Granada kept his many correspondents—the famed Archbishop of Milan, Carlo Borromeo, and Archbishop of Valencia Juan de Ribera among them—abreast of the prioress's marvelous communions with God. In a time when letters were often public texts, it is likely that their contents were spread. On occasion, some of them were printed. Although Granada seems to have been an unwilling participant in the printing of one of his first letters to Ribera about María, it nevertheless entered the public market, bestowing upon her the important air of legitimacy which only a man of Granada's repute could provide.

[10] For a brief biography in English, see John A. Moore, *Fray Luis de Granada* (Boston, 1977); on Granada and María, see Álvaro Huerga, "La monja de Lisboa y Fray Luis de Granada," *Hispania sacra* 12 (1959): 333–56.

Apart from the familiar list of virtues and miracles, the letter went so far as to claim that the nun was not unlike Saint Catherine (perhaps even greater) because "witnesses worthy of faith confess to having seen her sometimes elevated two palms up in the air."[11] In 1586 a book was printed in France with some letters by prominent priests, also effusive in their praise, this time approved by Granada himself. In 1587, when María was a subject of controversy both within and outside of the monastery, Granada was one of two churchmen called to carry out an official investigation, the subsequent report of which also found its way to a wide audience. Though not printed, it circulated in manuscript, and was reported in the many famed Fugger news-letters which contained the most important current events across Europe. In it the reader was made privy to the examination which proved definitively the veracity of the stigmata while re-affirming María's reverence to the church, at the same time emphasizing the mixture of pleasure and pain which characterized mystical experiences in the early modern period. The reader was told that María and her bleeding wounds stood "far above the possibilities and artfulness of human nature" and were true miracles "which God alone can produce, so as to testify the divinity of the Cross, and the wounds of our Savior, as the whole faith and the Christian religion are likewise founded on this mystery."[12]

But these sorts of texts were not enough. Though they tended to be vivid in their descriptions and no doubt served to inspire many readers, they did not necessarily lead to Christian understanding. While Granada would later claim that he was simply following orders when he began writing a book-length account of María's life, he seems to have been a moving force behind the project.[13] The book was thought necessary both as a didactic tool for Christians—the standard fare of hagiographies and martyrologies that sold so well at the time—and as a weapon against rumor and misunderstanding that seemed to linger around María. Not only was it meant to rebuke those who were suspicious

[11] "testimoni degni di fede confessano haverla veduta alcune volte elevata doi palmi in aria" (Granada to Ribera, Lisbon, 18 March 1584. In Luis de Granada, *Obras completas*, 19: 124. The letter was printed in Rome by Giacomo Ruffinelli in 1585).

[12] "Report on the examination of the Mother Prioress of the Cloister of the Annunciation which was held on account of her wounds," in Victor von Klarwill, ed., *The Fugger News-Letters: Being a Selection of Unpublished Letters from the Correspondents of the House of Fugger During the Years 1568–1605* (New York, 1925), p. 119.

[13] Granada to Borromeo, Lisbon, 28 January 1584. In Luis de Granada, *Obras completas*, 19: 122.

of the holy woman, but also it was intended as a corrective to popular perceptions of María devoid of a sound theological context.

Granada's *Historia de María de la Visitación*[14] was written after extensive conversations with María, her confessors, and those who were privy to her miraculous powers. Most importantly, the book used María's own writings. It seems that she herself wrote an account of her life from which Granada often quoted, particularly when discussing how to become closer to God. The *Historia* was thus the result of complicated negotiation between the object of study and her superiors, between María's own words and the words of those who were in charge of telling her story. Although it is difficult to know for certain what, if anything, María was trying to accomplish as she told her story, Granada was explicit in describing his intentions as he tried to press her life into print.

For Granada, María was the perfect example of Christian virtue in a world afflicted by heresy. The veneration of saints and accounts of their miracles which were so integral to early modern Catholic spiritual life had been much maligned by adherents to various reformed churches across Europe. María (so Granada thought) offered a perfect counter-argument against critics. He claimed that virtue was often etched on the body, and indeed Christ's greatest gift to mankind was his death on the cross, the horror of which was made eternal by five wounds inflicted on him. It would make no sense for holy acts to leave no "signs that would represent them", considering that kings and nobles made a point of commemorating military conquests using material objects. Christ did not want to commemorate His victory over evil on "base material, but on his most sacred feet, hands, and side", so that it would remain in men's memory "not only in this life, but much more in the next."[15] Saintliness was also a sign of God's grace bestowed upon those who were worthy: it was a reward for good works, devotion, obedience, and sacrifice. The path to spiritual union was lined with

[14] Modern edition in Luis de Granada, *Obras completas*, 17: 11–206.

[15] "Pues no era razón que triunfos tan gloriosos quedasen sin señales que los representasen, pues vemos que los reyes y señores y emperadores de la tierra, cuando vencen y triunfan en las batallas, hacen labrar en sus reposteros las imágines y figuras de sus triunfos. Mas nuestro verdadero Rey no quiso que en tan baja materia se estampasen las señales de sus triunfos, sino en sus sacratísimos pies y manos y costado, para gloria de estos triunfos, y para muestra de su amor, y para memorial perpetuo de este beneficio, no sólo en esta vida, pero mucho más en la venidera" (Luis de Granada, *Obras completas*, 17: 152–53).

equal measures of sweetness, tribulations, and eventual glory. María's case exemplified the close relationship Christ had with souls that were dead to the world but alive to him. For her victory over temptation, she too was given the markings of Christ's passion for the world to be reminded of His great sacrifice.

María's story was spectacular, but not unique. The world had long been witness to miracles—Granada cited various biblical figures, including Moses, to this effect—and so it stood to reason that God could (at will) perform the miraculous and endow others with extraordinary powers. Granada wanted the reader to understand that it should not be thought "incredible that He would do something today that He did before." His powers were not in any way lessened by the passage of time.[16] He warned the reader not to be swayed by "the condition of corruption of the present times" into disbelief.[17] It should be noted, however, that while miracles were an important part of Granada's text and all reports about María, they (in themselves) did not prove sanctity; as mentioned above, demons could also perform incredible acts.

Stories of how María cured the sick or how pieces of cloth she touched had the power to calm storms were measures of sanctity only when complemented by descriptions of her piety. Granada was a fervent advocate of private prayer for spiritual fulfillment. Thus it is not surprising that María's intense bouts of prayer were described as one of the primary preconditions for her close relationship with Christ and the various saints that appeared before her. Good works also needed reinforcement in an age of Protestant belief that faith alone was necessary for salvation. María's story did just that. Granada told his readers that, for example, María once nursed an old nun back to health by sharing bread with her. The old nun would only eat if María ate from the same loaf (María, fighting the urge to vomit, did so even though it meant consuming the blood and bile her patient left behind).[18] Other traits such as María's attachment to the life-size crucifix mentioned above offered Granada an opportunity to defend the propriety of sacred images as devotional aids against accusations of idolatry hurled

[16] "no se tenga por increíble hacer Él agora algo de lo que hizo entonces pues no está abreviada su mano con todo cuanto tiene hecho" (Luis de Granada, *Obras completas*, 17: 16).

[17] "ni le debe ser ocasión de incredulidad la condición o corrupción del tiempo presente" (Luis de Granada, *Obras completas*, 17: 57).

[18] Luis de Granada, *Obras completas*, 17: 111–12.

by confessional enemies. Proper devotion required considerable hard work. Becoming one with Christ required abnegation and bodily mortification. Fasting was an important part of Catholic spirituality, particularly female piety;[19] thus María was lauded for her rejection of food and of all things worldly. The reader was reminded that such rigors "are the first means" by which human beings might "begin to serve God in order to receive his grace."[20]

Proper regard for the sacrament of the Eucharist was subject to particular emphasis throughout the book. This was in part necessary because María's mystical experiences were inseparably linked with the sacramental rite. Prior to the stigmata appearing on her body, Granada reveals an episode in which the consecrated host was transported miraculously from the altar to María's mouth in the convent's chapel. More importantly, María claimed that in preparation for her stigmata, Christ himself had ordered her to give herself to prayer and consecutive days of Holy Communion; afterward she communed with abnormal frequency, a habit requiring official sanction by the church. This sort of Eucharistic devotion was symptomatic of a strong current in Counter-Reformation Europe, something that was subject to controversy across confessional lines, and which led to much wrangling over what Christ's statement *hoc est corpus meum* (Luke 22:19) actually meant. María and other mystics across Europe served as a counter-argument for Protestants who had argued against the true presence of Christ in the consecrated bread. Indeed, she proved that great devotion to the host helped Christians elevate themselves toward God. María's story was, in sum, crucial evidence in support of the type of rigorous, affective devotion which the likes of Granada and other luminaries such as Ignatius of Loyola were advocating throughout the 16th century, one that was particularly open to criticism from Protestant enemies harping on Catholic "superstition".

But if María's mysticism could play a role in the great confessional battles of the times, her story also spoke to concerns within the Catholic Church itself. Granada's book was clearly a devotional text meant to fortify those who were weak of faith. It also took a stand against many

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[19] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley, 1987).

[20] "Estos ejercicios de ayunos y oraciones son los primeros medios con los cuales se disponen los que comienzan a servir a Dios para alcanzar su gracia" (Luis de Granada, *Obras completas*, 17: 84).

within the church who, as we shall see below, were wary of ecstatic figures like María. As in part a reaction to Protestant critics, in part an effort to clean up its own house, and in part a result of the new historical practices of the times, the church was meticulously reworking, re-writing, and sometimes destroying certain long-standing figures of popular devotion. Local cults were scrutinized, as were popular hagiographies; and the canonization process became more complex and bureaucratic. Some saints were scrapped altogether, while some standard hagiographical texts were emended to remove the apocryphal, and quite often to diminish the miraculous bent in them. Tellingly, the more cautious temper of the 16th century was not conducive to the canonization of very many saints: there were none between 1523 and 1588.[21]

On the other hand, particularly in Italy and Spain, there remained a contradictory impulse to venerate so-called "living saints",[22] an impulse Granada seems to have embraced. He was unabashed in his claims about María's saintliness. Apart from often referring to her as a saint, he also (as we have seen) compared her to one of the most venerated holy women of the time, Saint Catherine of Siena. Granada often referred to both women in the same breath in his private correspondence and in his *Historia*, and he seems to have planned to publish a book defending Saint Catherine's stigmata right around the time the news of María's wounds broke. This seems far from coincidental. The link between the two women was to be expected: Saint Catherine played an important role in María's visions, and their stories were not altogether different. The saint also belonged to a Dominican convent, had also shown signs of the stigmata, manifested many of the character traits María did—submission to Christ, extreme penitence, humility, etc.—and had also been subject to suspicion by contemporaries. Her own confessor, who eventually became Dominican General, had at first been "perplexed and doubtful" about her mystical experiences.[23] But the truth ultimately prevailed. The spiritual genealogy linking both

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[21] Peter Burke, "How to Be a Counter-Reformation Saint," in *Religion and Society in Early Modern Europe, 1500–1800,* ed. Kaspar von Greyerz (London, 1984), pp. 45–65.

[22] See, for example, Gabriella Zarri, *Le sante vive: cultura e religiosità femminile nella prima età moderna* (Turin, 1990) and William J. Christian, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton, 1989).

[23] "pues el mismo padre que la confesaba…estuvo un tiempo tan perplejo y dubdoso" (Luis de Granada, *Obras completas*, 17: 36–37).

women was significant because it spoke to the continuity of God's grace, an important point during a time when the church was arguing that it was *semper eadem*, always the same.

Granada's book ultimately had only a limited effect on his contemporaries, for although some priests seem to have read it,[24] the *Historia* remained in manuscript until the 20th century. It is, nevertheless, useful insofar as it provides insight on what Granada and many of his contemporaries found so inspiring in the young prioress and why they thought her story was worthy of propagation across Europe. Moreover, the work reflects contemporary strands of interpretation about her. Like Granada, for example, Fray Juan de Pineda, in his *Monarchia ecclesiastica*, mentioned María in a few paragraphs dealing with past saintly figures, imagining her as the latest in a long line of holy women.[25] More importantly, in a letter written in 1584, Antonio de la Cerda mentioned the lessons to be learned from María's experiences, all of which in one way or another were alluded to in Granada's text. Her story, according to Cerda, spoke to the following truisms:

1. True religious men and women are agreeable to God
2. Saintly obedience is meritorious as well as charity, humility, and simplicity
3. Virginity is a very agreeable wife to our Lord Jesus Christ
4. It is necessary to revere and honor saintly images
5. Male and female saints in paradise are intercessors and our advocates
6. It is necessary to recognize the truth of the Eucharist
7. God is pleased that such a great sacrament is received often
8. God's gifts and his grace cannot be achieved without pain, prayer, and devotions
9. The passion and death of Christ is beneficial by means of our good works
10. Miracles have always existed in the Holy Roman Apostolic Church.[26]

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[24] Richard L. Kagan, *Lucrecia's Dreams: Politics and Prophecy in Sixteenth Century Spain* (Berkeley, 1995), p. 103.

[25] Juan de Pineda, *Monarchia ecclesiastica* (Salamanca, 1587), Part 3, fol. 465r.

[26] "1. Los verdaderos religiosos, y religiosas son muy agradables á Dios 2. La santa obediencia es meritoria, y la Caridad, humildad, y simplicidad de vida 3. La virginidad es muy agradable esposa de nuestro Señor Iesu Cristo 4. Es menester reverenciar y honrar las santas imágenes 5. Los santos y santas de paraíso son intercesores, y abo-

The zeal with which men like Cerda and Granada wrote about her reveals the real faith that many seem to have had in María, a faith that helps us put into perspective the shock that her subsequent downfall must have occasioned.

III

María had never been free from controversy. From the beginning there were doubters, and it should be noted that Granada's *Historia* makes frequent mention of her critics. As she became more of a celebrity, and as her influence increased, those critics became more numerous and vocal. The problem seems to have become most severe within the walls of the convent which María ran: though she was still popular among some of her sisters, she became a bitter enemy of others. The strife was, in part, the result of a feud with a small faction of women who were related by blood and were upset with the prioress's fame, questioning her leadership and (ultimately) her spirituality. These sort of familial factions were not at all uncommon. In 1588 the Dominican General, Sisto Fabri, sought to limit the extent to which close family members found themselves in the same Portuguese convents.[27] Whatever the roots of the problem, the fact is that some nuns were trying to catch María faking ecstasies or—better yet, from their perspective—painting the stigmata on her body. They also lobbied their superiors to inquire into María's supposedly feigned raptures. Local officials, as well as the Spanish court, were not likely to allow what had become a public scandal to go unchecked. The controversy was deemed an issue of utmost importance, in part because María seems to have begun spewing vitriolic prophecies against the Spanish Habsburgs, and worse, predicting the return of the then-legendary King Sebastian of Portugal, who had been killed in Morocco in 1578. More generally, there was concern that uproar within religious institutions

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gados por nosostros 6. Es menester reconocer la verdad del santísimo sacramento del altar 7. A Dios le plaze que un tan grande sacramento se reciba muchas vezes 8. No se pueden alcanzar los dones, y gracias de Iesu Christo, sin dolores, oraciones, y devociones 9. La passion y muerte de Iesu Christo nos es provechosa mediante nuestras obras 10. Los milagros se han siempre continuado en la iglesia Católica, Apostolica, Romana" (quoted in Cipriano de Valera, *Tratado para confirmar los pobres cativos de Berveria* [London, 1594], p. 121).

[27] Lisbon, Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo, Manuscritos da Livraria, MS. 533, fol. 64v.

could provoke the wrath of God. Even in places like Venice, seen by some modern scholars as a haven for libertinism in the early modern world, conflicts within cloisters were thought to, as one 17th-century commentator noted, "invoke divine justice."[28] No doubt the Spanish crown was worried that the Armada which was about to set sail to aid in the conquest of England would be thwarted by "the sins of the Anunciada".[29]

The tumult within the convent was seeping out into the streets and required inspection at the hands of high church officials who eventually decided María's fate. After rigorous questioning and multiple demands for a confession, a group of no-doubt-eager nuns were ordered to carry out the ultimate test of María's sanctity: they were instructed to wash off her wounds. As opposed to previous examinations—in which María persuaded those in charge to stop short of a thorough washing by claiming that the pain was too intense—this time her examiners were to demonstrate little mercy. The "miraculous" scars on her hands disappeared after rigorous use of soap and water. After further questioning, María confessed her fraudulent activities, and the Inquisition duly condemned her.

Once again Cardinal Archduke Albert, who was also Inquisitor General, rubber-stamped an official statement concerning María's fall in a report which, apart from describing her supposed miracles, also included the Inquisition's official verdict against the purported mystic.[30] María, the report states, fabricated her scars either with paint or by pricking herself with needles. Her levitations were the result of crafty bodily tricks, often involving the use of a little stick to prop herself up. The lights that she supposedly radiated in fact emanated from carefully hidden braziers. Her ecstasies and corporal contortions were not divinely inspired, but instead were the result of her own will. Importantly (and pointedly) the Cardinal also underscored that she had confessed her supposed prophecies—particularly those which would have chafed the Spanish court—were false. As a result of her deceit, the Inquisition decreed that María should be stripped of her priorship and barred from ever assuming any leadership position.

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[28] Quoted in Mary Laven, *Virgins of Venice: Broken Vows and Cloistered Lives in the Renaissance Convent* (New York, 2002), p. 148.

[29] "Item se ouvira dizer q pelos peccados da Anunciada se detinha a armada" (Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo, Inquisição de Lisboa, Proc. 11.824, fol. 19).

[30] Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 11.077, fols 12r–38v.

She was to be expelled from the Anunciada and sent to a convent in Abrantes, where she was to suffer life imprisonment and would remain at the bottom of the convent's hierarchy in perpetuity.

During a time when death was a real possibility for those subject to the Inquisition, this relatively mild sentence—a sentence which was, nevertheless, not uncommon in its leniency toward false, though repentant mystics—was justified by two important assertions found in the report. First, the reader was told that María was motivated by pure vanity, explicitly rejecting any suggestion that she had ever made "an implicit or explicit" pact with Satan.[31] This is of immense importance in a cultural landscape which often blurred the boundaries between a demoniac and a possible saint.[32] Were the devil to have been involved in María's raptures, another set of mechanisms (most importantly, exorcism) might have been employed. Even worse, the specter of witchcraft could have arisen, a charge that might have led to more severe punishment. Secondly, and just as importantly, when María confessed, she did so with many tears and signs of repentance. Only true remorse could earn God's forgiveness and that of the Holy Office.

The Inquisition's decree was meant to be the last word. Her falsehood exposed, her fate revealed, the Inquisition commanded that—taking into account the flood of reports and images concerning María—anything in print, manuscript, or any other media regarding her supposed saintliness should be handed over to the Holy Office. One painting was singled out as exemplary of the sorts of objects derided by ecclesiastical authorities, a canvas which hung in the convent of the Anunciada showing María's false stigmata. It (and, one presumes, all other such paraphernalia) was to be done away with "in such a way that it would

[31] "nunca se avia ayudado del poder del demonio ni se le avia aparecido ni tuvo con el comunicasion ni pacto taçito ni expreso" (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 11.077, fol. 32v).

[32] For a useful discussion on the hazy boundaries between the demonic and the saintly see, for example, Peter Dinzelbacher, *Santa o strega?: donne e devianza religiosa tra medioevo e etá moderna*, trans. Paola Massardo (Genoa, 1999); Stephen Haliczer, *Between Exaltation and Infamy: Female Mystics in the Golden Age of Spain* (New York, 2002); Hilaire Kallendorf, *Exorcism and its Texts: Subjectivity in Early Modern Literature of England and Spain* (Toronto, 2003); Dyan Elliott, *Proving Woman: Female Spirituality and Inquisitional Culture in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, 2004); and Sarah Ferber, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern France* (New York, 2004), Chapter 7.

seem that she had never been there."[33] Inquisition records in Castille reveal that many were eager to excise any mention of María and her supposed holiness from the fabric of contemporary religiosity. Even though some secular authorities were far from zealous in their quest for complete erasure, believing that only the author of false reports about María stood to lose by exposing his ignorance,[34] concern among clerics seems to have ensured that explicit references to her immediately following her downfall were limited. Still, at least two important authors offer windows into the types of arguments raised across Europe about the fallen nun.

Granada died toward the end of 1588 and was (so contemporaries attested) pained by the outcome of María's case and ashamed of his own credulity. Far from despairing, however, he set to work on two short pieces meant to both rehabilitate his tarnished reputation and exhort good Catholics not to lose faith. The strategy seems to have been two-fold. One short pamphlet, a printed letter to the Empress María of Austria,[35] was to explain why so many learned men had been duped by the false mystic. A longer work, the *Sermón de las caídas públicas*,[36] was meant to be more substantial; while avoiding any direct reference to María, it was obviously about her as he exhorted his flock to look forgivingly upon holy frauds.

In his letter to the empress, Granada made sure to underscore the fact that he was one among many priests who believed in María's holiness. This was nearly inevitable, considering that to all appearances she had been virtuous. It was required of good Christians, he argued, to embrace—not reject—those who showed outward signs of goodness. Only God could judge a person's soul; men must make their judgments based on evidence at hand, in particular a person's penchant for good works.[37] As for María, Granada assured the empress that she

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[33] "se quite y bore de manera que paresca q nunca alli estuvo y q lo mesmo se haga en todas las partes donde estuviere su retrato…y se recojan todos los libros y papeles que de ella tratan" (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. 11.077, fol. 38r).

[34] Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Inquisición, Legajo 4436, no. 12.

[35] "Copia de una carta que el padre fray Luis de Granada escribió a la Majestad de la emperatriz sobre la causa de María de la Visitación," in Luis de Granada, *Obras completas*, 19: 182–87.

[36] Luis de Granada, *Obras completas*, 17: 207–56.

[37] "es alabado un decreto del papa Ceferino, el cual dice ser pecado juzgar nadie lo interior del corazón, y no pareciendo en lo de fuera de las personas sino buenas obras, maldad es condenarlas por nuestras sospechas, pues Dios es el juez de lo secreto de nuestro corazón" (Luis de Granada, *Obras completas*, 19: 183).

humbly "recognized her fault and prostrate on the ground begged for pardon and absolution from the Holy Office", something she received in light of the fact that she was not culpable of an "error of faith", nor had she made a "pact with the devil".[38] As far as the long-lasting effects of the problems in the convent of the Anunciada, Granada proclaimed that it was well known that God on occasion deigned it appropriate for a scandal to arise, if only to fortify the faithful.

And yet, inevitably, not all would be fortified. Granada's *Sermón* was an attack on those who, instead of using María's case as food for spiritual growth, used it as fodder to ridicule the church and repudiate the veracity of saints and miracles. The fall of a person reputed to be saintly was dangerous because it was then that "the good cry, the bad laugh, and the weak faint, and finally almost all are scandalized, and they lose faith in the virtue of good people."[39] But why should it be so that one fallen saint could destroy a man's faith? Granada insisted that history was filled with examples of men and women who had fallen from grace. Was not one of Noah's three sons mired in evil? Did not one of Christ's own disciples go astray? Granada argued that God permitted controversies in order to test the faith of His flock. By doing this, He discovered "who truly loves God and who does not."[40] Those who loved God would, instead of condemning those who fell, live with "greater fear and distrust in themselves, telling themselves: I am man like him, conceived in sin like him, and subject to the same temptations as him."[41] They should also be aware of the fact that those who fell the hardest often went on to enjoy great "penances and life changes".[42] Taking this into account, Granada offered Portugal's

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[38] "Entonces ella, con mucha humildad, reconoció su culpa, y postrada en tierra, pidió perdón y absolución del oficio, y la recibió, y con ella la penitencia le fue dada…y fue dada con piedad por no entrevenir en esta culpa error de fe ni pacto con el demonio" (Luis de Granada, *Obras completas*, 19: 186).

[39] "porque aquí es donde los buenos lloran y los malos ríen y los flacos desmayan y, finalmente, casi todos se escandalizan y pierden el crédito de la virtud de los buenos" (Luis de Granada, *Obras completas*, 17: 216).

[40] "porque por aquí se vea quién ama a Dios de veras y quién no" (Luis de Granada, *Obras completas*, 17: 237).

[41] "pues de semejantes caídas no teman los siervos de Dios ocasión para estimar a sí y despreciar a los que cayeron, sino para vivir de ahí adelante con mayor temor y desconfianza de sí mismos, diciendo entre sí: Yo soy hombre como aquél, y concibido en pecado como él, y subjecto a las mismas tentaciones que él" (Luis de Granada, *Obras completas*, 17: 220).

[42] "Porque muchas veces las grandes caídas vienen a ser ocasión de grandes penitencias y mudanzas de vida" (Luis de Granada, *Obras completas*, 17: 220).

political elite (particularly Cardinal Archduke Albert) a not-too-subtle message urging temperance in public reactions to those who erred. He evoked the memory of King Henry, Philip II's direct predecessor, who, when he was Cardinal and Inquisitor General of Portugal, "was careful (when someone who proffered virtue and devotion was punished by the Holy Office) to order all preachers not to speak in such a way that might cool off and weaken the devotion of the people."[43] The goal was to avoid "scandal", a very important theological concept in a world experiencing religious strife which referred specifically to any proclamation or act that would lead Christians astray. By arguing thus, Granada did not transform María from a venerable figure to an object of derision. To the contrary, she remained an edifying symbol of man's weakness. More importantly, she became an instrument, a tool used to separate the wheat from the chaff, the true Catholic from the sinner, those who understood the lesson set before them from those who chose to reject Christ.

Apart from being an attack on the weak who had been troubled by recent events, the *Sermón* was also meant to be a reaffirmation of everything María had stood for but had failed to embody. No theme received more attention than the Eucharist, which was defended as a means to achieve a more profound relationship with Christ if enjoyed in moderation and with proper spiritual preparation in the form of penance and avid prayer. While maintaining that mystics and other such figures were very much part of the fabric of Christendom, Granada nevertheless called for discretion, for abnegation, and for the rejection of fame. He enjoined those who were endowed with seemingly holy attributes to look upon their gifts with suspicion, suggesting that women of virtue in particular should turn away from fame and reject the secular world. Failing to resist worldly temptations provided Satan with an opening to lead those with potential for sanctity down a nefarious path.

In 1589 the Spanish Jesuit Pedro de Ribadeneira in his *Tratado de tribulación* also offered an interpretation of the causes for (and effects of) contemporary charismatic female personages. The book was written on the heels of the failed Armada campaign—a campaign which

[43] "tenía cuidado (cuando alguna persona que profesaba virtud y devoción era castigada por el Santo Oficio) mandar a todos los predicadores que no hablasen palabra alguna con que se pudiesse entibiar y enflaquecer la devoción del pueblo" (Luis de Granada, *Obras completas*, 17: 228).

problems at the Anunciada were said to have adversely affected—and was meant to be an exposition of all the ills afflicting Spanish lands and the lessons that might be drawn from them to help Spaniards become better Christians. Toward the end of his book, Ribadeneira singled out ecstatic women as both catalysts and manifestations of contemporary tribulations and as auguries of possible renewal. Interestingly, he did not mention María by name, though there is no doubt that the author knew about the case, as he was a well-informed fixture in and around court and ecclesiastical circles. For our purposes it seems safe to assume that while Ribadeneira was not speaking exclusively about María, she was implicitly a prime target of his analysis. The case was too famous, too fresh, for us to assume otherwise.

Ribadeneira was generally appalled by the flood of *mujercillas* who fancied themselves exalted, sarcastically thinking it a marvel that so many *llagadas* (wounded women) had appeared throughout Europe.[44] The phenomenon was particularly dangerous because, like Granada, he believed it touched on the "well-being of souls and the true knowledge, love, and esteem of virtue."[45] Also like Granada in his post-María works, Ribadeneira insisted that the false mystic was "not a new thing".[46] Like his Dominican contemporary, he saw the phenomenon as being of providential design: scheming women were to "rise so that they fall with greater ignominy".[47] Their fall would cure the "malignant humor" to which they, and society at large, were subjected.[48] For those who fell prey to the wiles of false prophets, God was providing a lesson on the "weakness and misery of our human nature".[49]

Unlike Granada, however, the Jesuit was far more skeptical about man's abilities to identify holiness. He was far more concerned about the believer's penchant to embrace purported mystics. Ribadeneira had little to say about any of the positive attributes of contemporary

[44] Pedro de Ribadeneira, *Tratado de tribulación* (Madrid, 1589), fol. 212v.

[45] "se puede tener este por un genero de tribulacion terrible: y tanto mas peligroso quanto mas toca al bien de las almas, y al conocimiento verdadero, y amor, y estima de la virtud" (Ribadeneira, *Tratado de tribulación*, fol. 209r).

[46] "no es cosa nueva, y nunca vista en el mundo, sino muy usada y acostumbrada" (Ribadeneira, *Tratado de tribulación*, fol. 209v).

[47] "assi permite nuestro señor que estas tales personas se levanten para que caygan con mayor ignominia" (Ribadeneira, *Tratado de tribulación*, fol. 220r).

[48] "se conozcan, y humillen, y con el abatimiento de fuera se cure el humor maligno" (Ribadeneira, *Tratado de tribulación*, fol. 222r).

[49] "tambien nos declara Dios con esto la flaqueza y miseria de nuestra naturaleza humana" (Ribadeneira, *Tratado de tribulación*, fol. 222v).

llagadas, instead emphasizing how they epitomized man's gullibility and his little interest in the true substance of things, making much ado about "scars and signs that we see, and so little of solid virtues of many of God's servants".[50] While Granada argued that outward appearances should be taken as indicators of holiness, Ribadeneira rejected this claim, favoring circumspection and prizing (admittedly inscrutable) interior spirituality above all. While Ribadeneira did not deny that God might endow certain people with outward signs of saintliness, he did not accept the logic that these signs—however true they might be—were *clear* indicators of grace. The good Christian should generally look to the church and its clerics in distinguishing good from evil, but Ribadeneira warned that even such experts erred. It had been seen (and this is, no doubt, a nod to Granada) that "great men", even men "filled with devotion, piety and zeal believed in everything that they thought might inspire devotion and secure piety, and might amplify the glory of God in His church." Since they themselves were "saints, they gave credit to all that which seemed saintly", a common malady afflicting the truly virtuous.[51] This apparent wariness of contemporary charismatic religious figures, a wariness exacerbated by María's fall, is very much in line with Ribadeneira's ever-hardening stance against those who occupied themselves with writing the lives of questionable saints, "as if God needed them", as if God were well served by "false miracles".[52]

Although Granada's optimistic suggestion that holy figures like María often rebounded and attained a measure of true virtue never died out, she was more generally evoked as an aberrant example of failed piety. After her sentence, María seems to have led a quiet and virtuous life. Some contemporaries may have indeed seen in her a model of rehabilitation and redemption;[53] but even among optimistic

[50] "pues tanto hazemos de unas llagas, y señales que vemos, y tan poco de las virtudes solidas y maciças de muchos siervos de Dios" (Ribadeneira, *Tratado de tribulación*, fol. 222v).

[51] "los quales por sagrados siervos de dios, y llenos de devocion, piedad y zelo, creyeron todo lo que les parecio podia despertar la devocion" (Ribadeneira, *Tratado de tribulación*, fols 227v–228r).

[52] "pareceme que aunque cualquier mentira es fea, é indigna de hombre christiano, pero mucho mas la que se compusiesse, forjasse relatando vida de santos: como si dios tuviesse necessidad de ella, o no fuesse cosa agena de la piedad Christiana, querer honrar y glorificar al señor, que es suma y eterna verdad, con eventos falsos" (Pedro de Ribadeneira, *Obras* [Madrid, 1595], fol. 3v).

[53] Luis Muñoz, *Vida y virtudes del venerable varon Fray Luis de Granada* (Madrid, 1639), fols 116r–v.

moralists, she was ultimately employed to comment on the dangers of mysticism. Luis de Bavia, for example, recounted that many of those who had known María assured him that it was only after her sentence that she began to be "a true saint". And yet, the ultimate lesson to be drawn from her story concerned the dangers inherent in venerating those who had not been officially recognized by the church.[54] The Dominican friar Agustín Salucio, not unlike Ribadeneira, also used María as a means to criticize the popular embrace of spurious legends. In a discourse amounting to a defense of Granada, Salucio made a telling analogy between his deceased *confrère* and an unnamed cleric who sought edification in the *Vitae patrum*, a book filled (from his perspective) with many apocryphal stories. The anonymous cleric stubbornly insisted that his faith could only be strengthened by a book which contained so many worthy *exempla*; Granada too, Salucio suggested, was no doubt absorbing many an edifying lesson from María, who had to all outward appearances seemed worthy of praise.[55] Still this did not take away from the fact that María was a fraud; and if we follow the analogy, that much of the *Vitae patrum* was also one. The parallel between a standard devotional text and María is revealing. It suggests that in at least one mind, she stood not only for the troubles of the 16th-century church, but for troubles that had faced the church for ages. María stood as the epitome of the fraudulent that many reformers before and after the Reformation had sought to expunge from the Catholic Church. For every Granada who saw true mystics as an expression of an idealized interior spirituality, many had long argued (as the famed humanist Lorenzo Valla did) that legends and folklore "do more to overturn the faith, because they are false, than to strengthen it, because they are miraculous."[56] No Catholic denied miracles occurred. But even in books that were themselves about holy women, María was often mentioned as a limiting case. Not surprisingly, nearly a century after her fall, and decades after her death, prefatory texts to a biography of a New World holy woman, Catarina de San Juan, reminded the reader of María and how all those credulous

[54] Luis de Bavia, *Tercera parte de la historia pontifical y católica* (Madrid, 1613), p. 467.

[55] Fray Agustín Salucio, "Discurso," in Manuel Hoyos, *Historia del Colegio de San Gregorio de Valladolid* (Valladolid, 1930), p. 155.

[56] Lorenzo Valla, *On the Donation of Constantine*, trans. G. W. Bowersock (Cambridge, 2007), p. 119.

people who surrounded her were ultimately brought into the Inquisitorial vortex.[57]

If in the Catholic world María was used as a warning against superstition, it is far from surprising that confessional enemies would do the same. Unlike their "papist" foes, however, they were likely to point out how her case exemplified inherent Catholic corruption. Cipriano de Valera,[58] a Spanish Protestant living in London, wrote a short tract on the subject attached to his *Tratado para confirmar los pobres cativos de Berveria*, in which the fallen nun was portrayed as divine retribution against the Roman Church.[59] Catholics, he argued, had a long history of using fallacious tales to deceive the masses. It was not surprising to him that so many people, both high and low, had believed María's lies. When it became evident to everyone—for this point, he cited the Inquisitorial findings mentioned above—that she was not divinely inspired, instead of divulging the full truth, Catholics tried to hide the fact that she had made a pact with (and was possessed by) Satan. Like his Catholic counterparts, Valera believed that divinely ordained miracles were possible; but unlike them, he asserted that God had not endowed humans with such powers since the earliest days of the Christian church. Still, María—as per the many Catholic accounts which had been spreading around Europe—had moments of clairvoyance, and was able to do such things as heal the sick. Taking this into account, Valera concluded that the miraculous acts attributed to her were the work of the devil.

Valera's suspicion of Satanic involvement in María's story was no doubt shared by some Catholics.[60] But no Catholic could have agreed with his ultimate conclusions. Identifying María as a demoniac allowed Valera to make at least two important polemical arguments. Since the Inquisition did not punish her, he was able to underscore the hypocrisy inherent in the Holy Office's treatment of those subject to its justice. How was it that Protestants were so readily burned at the

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[57] Cited in Kathleen Ann Myers, *Neither Saints nor Sinners: Writing the Lives of Women in Spanish America* (Oxford, 2003), p. 58.

[58] On Valera see Paul J. Hauben, *Three Spanish Heretics and the Reformation* (Geneva, 1967).

[59] Cipriano de Valera, *Enxambre de los falsos milagros, y ilusiones del demonio con que Maria de la Visitación priora de la Anunciada de Lisboa engaño a muy muchos: y de cómo fue descubierta y condenada año de 1588*, appended to his *Tratado para confirmar los pobres cativos de Berveria* (London, 1594).

[60] See, for example, Ana de San Bartolomé, *Autobiografía* (Madrid, 1969), p. 95.

stake for following and protecting the tenets established by the Bible, while a spawn of Satan was allowed to finish her days far from burning flames? Valera was also able to use her case to make a theological point about the Eucharist. María's supposed piety was marked by her veneration of the host, an obsession no doubt inspired and encouraged by Satan. By arguing thus, Valera was hurling a lacerating attack against transubstantiation: the holy wafer was nothing more than a Satanic snack. This claim had important implications, for if "the sacrament they sell as the body of Christ is not the body of Christ, nor his sacrament…but profanation," then once Spaniards recognize this fact, "the Pontifical kingdom will fall…along with all other superstition, ignorance, heresy, and idolatry" which had "no foundation in God's word, but in false dreams, and demonic illusions."[61]

IV

A common theme in studies about female spirituality and mysticism in the early modern world revolves around the notion of authority. As one scholar has summed it up, mysticism "provided an alternative source of authority for religious women," often allowing them to "circumvent the controlling authority of male clerics."[62] No doubt María wielded real power during her years of spiritual exaltation. Men of the highest repute—the commander of the Armada, the Duke of Medina Sidonia, for example—sought her blessings, religious women across Iberia were influenced by or sought to emulate her, and rebellious subjects in Portugal were said to be taking cues from her. Unlike many other women of her time, María's spiritual acuity allowed her to have a voice of her own, to dialogue with some of the most respected early modern religious figures, and to craft an image of herself that would be propagated across Europe. Still, she was not in complete control of her destiny. Throughout this essay we have been witness to the important role men played in mediating how she was presented to a broader public. Indeed, as mentioned before, in a sense this essay has not been

[61] "su sacramento que venden por cuerpo de Cristo, no es el cuerpo de Cristo, ni su sacramento…sino profanación. Si una vez nuestros Españoles comienzan á entender esto el reyno Pontificio caera…y assi la demas supersticion, ignorancia, heregia, y idolatria…que ningun fundamento tiene en la palabra de dios, sino en sueños falsos milagros, y ilusiones del demonio" (Cipriano de Valera, *Enxambre*, p. 144).

[62] R. Po-Chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 142.

about María at all, but about priests who (initially, at least) worked to propel her onto an international stage. The relationship between the young abbess and her superiors was symbiotic and mutually reinforcing. As María became a spiritual guide, the Dominican order could show her (and itself) off to the world. Individual clerics were thereby given a tool with which to propagate their idea of spiritual probity.

After her fall, María's voice was muffled by her condemning superiors. Her communications with the world outside her convent were severely limited immediately after her sentencing. As suggested above, her name reverberated as a salient example of the pitfalls of fraudulent piety. In 1603 many of the restrictions imposed on María by the Inquisition were lifted;[63] still she lived out her days without drawing any negative attention to herself, overcoming any temptation (if indeed there was any) to reclaim the clout she had once exercised over the political and religious affairs of her times. As years passed, the complicated meanings read into María's rise and fall were diluted, and for centuries her story more often than not was used simply to, as one 18th-century Englishman put it, "reclaim good people from error."[64] As we have seen, however, María and her experiences, before and immediately after they had been deemed fraudulent, were subject to complex (and at times contradictory) interpretations. Her meteoric rise was due to the fact that many Catholics saw in her a confirmation of their religious beliefs, the power of the miraculous, and the heavenly rewards their faith provided. Her fall produced multivalent reactions from astonishment to woe, from glee to pity. While she invariably became a negative example, her critics treated her with varying severity. In more extreme cases, she came to symbolize the "demonic roots" of Catholicism. More sympathetic commentators wavered between rejecting her as just another fraud and using her as a means to urge others to avoid her fate and argue against credulity. In the interstices of these different modes of interpretation, we see traces of the tensions—both inter- and intra- confessional—which afflicted early modern Europe. At stake for all commentators were fundamental issues of proper modes of worship, propriety, and virtue. At stake also was the contested credibility of the Catholic Church and, more broadly, the contested credibility of mystical experiences.

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[63] Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo, Inquisição de Lisboa, Proc. 11.894, n.f.
[64] Mr. Queely, *The Jesuits Catechism* (London, 1763), pp. 29–32.

PART THREE

INTERDISCIPLINARY APPLICATIONS

THE GARDENS OF TERESA OF ÁVILA

Maryrica Ortiz Lottman

The Ávila of the 16th century would have seemed quite rural to our eyes, and its semi-agricultural aspect continued into the second half of the 20th century. During the life of Teresa of Ávila (1515–82), farm animals such as pigs and cows were known to roam the city streets, in disregard of the ordinance of 1485. Land was farmed just beyond the city walls, and even inside the city, private houses, convents and monasteries all contained gardens and orchards.[1] Throughout Europe, real gardens provided privacy and quiet in a protected setting, a space utilized by both lovers and monks. At the same time, the fantastic gardens of literary and iconographic traditions stimulated both the erotic and the religious imagination. In such a setting, real and imagined gardens naturally blossomed in the writings of Teresa of Ávila and in her conception of Saint Joseph's, the first Discalced Carmelite convent. These green retreats inspired much of the religious allegory central to *The Life of Saint Teresa of Ávila by Herself* (*Libro de la vida*, 1565).[2] They also influenced her other works, especially *Interior Castle* (*Castillo interior*, 1577). Teresa's writings reflect the realities of women's lives and of manual labor as they were experienced in the walled gardens of early modern Spain. In her work she contemplates a number of garden forms: from the kitchen garden to the kingly pleasure garden, and from the common patio garden to the hermitage garden as it was inherited through the Carmelite tradition and revived during the Counter Reformation. With devotion and imagination, she expands upon a number of garden types drawn from secular literary sources. But chiefly she relies on exegetical literature and Christian iconography, exploring such motifs as the garden of the soul, the *hortus conclusus* (enclosed garden) of the Virgin Mary, the bridal landscape of the Song of Songs, and the highly symbolic medieval cloister.

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[1] Jodi Bilinkoff, *The Ávila of Saint Teresa: Religious Reform in a Sixteenth-Century City* (Ithaca, 1989), p. 11.

[2] *The Life of Saint Teresa of Ávila by Herself*, trans. J. M. Cohen (New York, 1957); *Libro de la vida*, ed. Otger Steggink (Madrid, 1986).

Her innovations include sweetening a garden she inherited from her model, Francisco de Osuna.

The gardens that live inside Teresa's works contain a variety of flora and fauna—from thorns to birds and bees to flower species—and an abundance of other realistic details.[3] In her depiction of the springtime garden, rain soaks the whole plot of land and descends when least expected, with God granting the bird-like soul a needed rest.[4] Such images are typical of Teresa's poetic ability to combine the ordinary observation of nature with religious allegory. Key elements of her gardens also evoke features of the *locus amoenus* or pleasance, the idealized landscape that originated in classical Latin poetry.[5] Teresa gives special attention to flowers (in keeping with the Marian tradition), as when she refers to God walking in the garden and tells us, "I would beg Him to increase the fragrance of those little flowers of virtue, which seemed as if they were beginning to bud."[6] In this and other passages, wherever Teresa compares flowers to virtues, she implies multiple flower species without any need to name them. In these instances, 16th-century readers would have immediately recognized in such allusions the floral allegory of Mary's virtues, wherein the lily symbolizes purity and the tiny violet represents humility.[7]

The themes of labor, love and humility occupy chapters 11 to 22 of the *Life*, and all of these concerns are addressed in Teresa's portrait of the garden. Allegorically, the individual soul is not only the garden, but also the gardener whose task it is to create a paradise from a barren plot of land. The gardener's effort in cultivating the virtues corresponds to the depth of her prayerful relationship to God. A neglected garden will fall back into the soul's original sinful state, described as a dunghill.[8] The novice who pursues the four degrees of prayer must dig by hand in arid soil and pull up the stubbornest of weeds.

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[3] The flora and fauna of Teresa of Ávila and San Juan de la Cruz are described in Elizabeth Teresa Howe's *Mystical Imagery: Santa Teresa de Jesús and San Juan de la Cruz* (New York, 1988), pp. 59–120.

[4] Teresa of Ávila, *Life* 18.9, p. 125.

[5] Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1990), pp. 195–200.

[6] Teresa of Ávila, *Life* 14.9, p. 101; "Suplicávale aumentase el olor de las florecitas de virtudes que comenzavan" (*Vida* 14.9, p. 220).

[7] Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (New York, 1976), pp. 99, 100, 307.

[8] Teresa of Ávila, *Life* 14.11, as discussed in Joseph F. Chorpenning's "The Monastery, Paradise, and the Castle: Literary Images and Spiritual Development in Saint Teresa of Ávila," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 62.3 (1985): 245–57, at p. 252.

Joseph F. Chorpenning has neatly summarized the types of prayer corresponding to the collection of water (divine grace) in the allegorical chapters of the *Life*. In the first stage, the gardener must carry heavy buckets from the well and must also suffer through times when the well has run dry. During the second stage of prayer, the garden is watered through the use of a waterwheel and aqueducts, and its plants and trees begin to develop buds. In the third stage, the gardener diverts water from a river or a creek into irrigation channels, and after these initial labors God almost entirely assumes the work of watering. Now the soul / gardener can luxuriate in the fragrance of the plants and flowers. In the fourth and final stage of prayer, watering the garden requires no human effort, since natural rainfall soaks the ground. Furthermore, the garden's delicious fragrances attract the attention of neighbors, and the soul is able to share the garden's fruit with them.[9]

Throughout Teresa's writings, the soul-as-gardener is always a lowly worker who represents the gardener-laborer as opposed to the landscape architect, for the distinction between these jobs was still evolving in Renaissance Europe. This gardener-laborer, the *hortelano,* exemplifies the virtue of humility by hauling water, pulling weeds, and digging channels. In *The Book of Her Foundations* (*Libro de fundaciones*, 1573–82?), the sheer drudgery of turning the soil in a garden appears in the story of a bone-tired monk who was ordered to dig in the garden and was rewarded for his efforts with a vision of Christ. This anecdote occurs immediately after Teresa reminds her sisters of the potential for prayerfulness in manual labor even while working in the kitchen.[10] In the mid-16th century, while Teresa was conceiving and composing the *Life*, the gardener exercised a lowly profession, one that must have often been assigned to the Moors of Ávila, who were employed as farmers.[11] Very frequently, there would have been little professional distinction between a laborer-gardener and a professional landscape designer. In any event, Teresa consistently uses the word *hortelano* (gardener-laborer), not *jardinero* (a term more frequently applied to the designer of pleasure gardens). In 1582, during the same

[9] Joseph F. Chorpenning, "Saint Teresa of Ávila as Allegorist: Chapters 11–22 of the *Libro de la vida,*" *Studia mystica* 9.1 (1986): 3–22, at pp. 10–11.

[10] Teresa of Ávila, *The Book of Her Foundations,* trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodríguez, in *The Collected Works of* Saint *Teresa of Ávila* (Washington, D.C., 1985), 3: 95–309; *Foundations* 5.8–9, pp. 119–20; *Libro de las fundaciones,* ed. Víctor García de la Concha (Madrid, 1982), 5.8–9, pp. 75–76.

[11] Bilinkoff, *The Ávila of Saint Teresa*, p. 11.

year of Teresa's death, Gregorio de los Ríos, the royal gardener of Phillip II, made a plea for the professional recognition of garden designers in *Agricultura de jardines* (first edition 1582).[12] The Discalced Carmelite nuns under Teresa's direction obediently imitated the *hortelano* rather than the *jardinero*. Teresa required that all nuns engage in manual labor, even the convent prioresses.[13] By contrast, the labor of the nuns inside traditional convents consisted of offering prayers and masses in exchange for the financial support of their aristocratic benefactors. Teresa's Discalced Carmelites supported themselves in large part through their own manual labor, at least during the initial era of their existence.[14] However, the nuns' daily labors were at least supplemented by the work of male gardeners, for whom a special door was built in the wall of Saint Joseph's Convent, allowing the men access to the garden while avoiding contact with the cloistered women.[15] Each nun had her own small garden, as evidenced in Teresa's anecdote about planting a wilted cucumber. She tells us that one day she feigned ignorance of gardening and told one of the younger sisters to plant a rotting cucumber:

> I called a Sister, one of those with greater intelligence and talents, to test her obedience and told her to go and plant the cucumber in [one of the little gardens that each of us had].[16] She asked me if she should plant it upright or sideways. I told her sideways. She went out and planted it, without the thought entering her mind that the cucumber would only dry up.[17]

Here Teresa points to the younger nun's perfectly virtuous but nonsensical actions as an example of an obedience so extreme that it blinded common sense. This anecdote illustrates that since plants were

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[12] Gregorio de los Ríos, *La agricultura de jardines, que trata de la manera que se ha de criar, governar, y conservar las plantas* (Zaragoza, 1620), transcription in *A próposito de la «Agricultura de Jardines» de Gregorio de los Ríos* (Madrid, ca. 1991), pp. 261–325, at p. 264.

[13] Bilinkoff, *The Ávila of Saint Teresa*, p. 128.

[14] Bilinkoff, *The Ávila of Saint Teresa*, pp. 51–52.

[15] Luis Cervera Vera, *Complejo arquitectónico del Monasterio de San José en Ávila* ([Madrid], 1982), p. 34.

[16] Throughout this article, wherever I have disagreed with the published translation I have substituted my own version in brackets.

[17] Teresa of Ávila, *Foundations* 1.3, p. 100; "[D]íjela que fuese a sembrar aquel cogombro a un huertecillo que teníamos. Ella me preguntó si le había de poner alto o tendido. Yo le dije que tendido. Ella fue y púsole, sin venir a su pensamiento que era imposible dejarse de secar" (*Fundaciones* 1.3, p. 50).

so intrinsic a part of daily life (providing the convent with food, with occupation, and with objects of prayerful contemplation), they also offered practical "food for thought".

Providing water for a convent's gardens and for daily use required real physical toil, care, planning, and worry. Luis Cervera Vera's architectural study of Saint Joseph's Convent gives a thorough picture of the system of wells, aqueducts and cisterns that supplied water to the institution. Cervera Vera notes that despite Ávila's scarcity of water and the ground's thin layer of useful soil, Saint Joseph's successfully exercised a degree of organization and agricultural know-how that was seldom seen in other convents and monasteries.[18] The interesting story of the ongoing scarcity of water in Ávila and its effect on the relations between the convent and the municipality (both during and after Teresa's lifetime) is told by Jodi Bilinkoff.[19] Part of Ávila's early opposition to the founding of the convent was the fear that the walled compound would shut off the townspeople from a fountain that had theretofore been publicly accessible.[20] Because of a water shortage, Saint Joseph's original hermitages were destroyed by order of the city government, but more land was quickly annexed and new hermitages were soon built.[21] In the *Foundations*, Teresa tells us that when an old well failed, she herself chose the location of a productive new one.[22] Among the convent's several wells, this Well of the Samaritan Woman (John 4:7–42),[23] located just beyond the convent walls and near the aqueduct, proved to be an important source of water.[24] Teresa identified the Samaritan woman as an individual like herself who had been wounded by a "celestial herb".[25]

Luce López-Baralt has investigated the parallels between Islamic mysticism and Teresa's meditations.[26] Together with a recent study

[18] Cervera Vera, *Complejo*, p. 33.
[19] Bilinkoff, *The Ávila of Saint Teresa*, pp. 58, 153–54.
[20] Bilinkoff, *The Ávila of Saint Teresa*, p. 139.
[21] Cervera Vera, *Complejo*, p. 28.
[22] Teresa of Ávila, *Foundations* 1.4, p. 100; *Fundaciones* 1.4, p. 50.
[23] All biblical references can be found in *The Holy Bible, Translated from the Latin Vulgate*, ed. Richard Challoner (Rockford, Illinois, 1989).
[24] Cervera Vera, *Complejo*, p. 33.
[25] Carol Slade, *Saint Teresa of Ávila: Author of a Heroic Life* (Berkeley, 1995), pp. 56–59.
[26] Luce López-Baralt, "Santa Teresa and Islamic Mysticism: The Symbol of the Seven Castles of the Soul," in *Islam in Spanish Literature: From the Middle Ages to the Present* (Leiden, 1992), pp. 91–142.

underscoring the interplay between gardens and Islamic Sufism,[27] López-Baralt's work prompts us to ask whether Islamic gardens are referenced in Teresa's writings. Francisco Márquez Villanueva has detailed the pervasive character of Islamic culture in Ávila,[28] while Bilinkoff has revealed the influence of Islamic culture in the working population and in place names such as the Huerta del Moro (Garden of the Moor).[29] Moreover, the city's irrigation system—on which gardens depended—may well have been designed by Muslims and inherited from earlier centuries. However, there is no indication that Teresa ever imagined or alluded to Islamic gardens, especially given the fact that some garden features are common to both Christian and Islamic gardens, especially the presence of fountains and the use of intersecting pathways dividing the land into four quadrants. Her allegory of the four methods of watering the garden may parallel the four intersecting water channels of the Islamic garden, but the origin of these four methods can more easily be found in the four rivers of Genesis (2:10). The gardens described by Teresa possess none of the features that distinguish an Islamic garden from a Christian one. Islamic gardens frequently contain pools and fountains in which the water is kept level with the brim of the receptacle for the convenience of the faithful, who must perform their ablutions several times a day. But this detail is not to be found in the *Life*'s many descriptions of waterworks. The pathways inside Islamic gardens are very often raised well above the beds of trees and flowers so that the budding heads of these plants are level with the walkway, creating the overall effect of walking on a flowered carpet. In the chapters of the *Life* devoted to the garden, Teresa often speaks of a path or road, but she never mentions flowers just at the level of her feet, creating the impression of a luxurious rug brought outdoors.

In the *Life*, Teresa seems to call her garden a "kitchen garden" (*huerta*), an "orchard" (*huerto*),[30] or a "pleasure garden" (*vergel*) rather

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[27] Maria Eva Subtelny, "The Traces of the Traces: Reflections of the Garden in the Persian Mystical Imagination," in *Gardens and Imagination: Cultural History and Agency*, ed. Michel Conan (Washington, D.C., 2008), pp. 19–39.

[28] Francisco Márquez Villanueva, "Ávila, ciudad morisca y cuna de espiritualidad," in *Melanges María Soledad Carrasco Urgoiti / Tahiyyat Taqdir Lil-Dukturah María Soledad Carrasco Urgoiti*, ed. Abdeljelil Temimi (Zaghouan, Tunisia, 1999), 1: 209–19.

[29] Bilinkoff, *The Ávila of Saint Teresa*, p. 11.

[30] The word *huerto* means orchard, but it could also describe a vegetable garden or kitchen garden.

arbitrarily. She writes, "Now let us return to our [kitchen garden] or [pleasure garden], and see how the trees begin to grow heavy with blossom and afterwards with fruit, and how the carnations and other flowers begin to smell sweet."[31] In a passage quoted earlier, she tells us she delighted in thinking of her soul as a "garden", but the same word (*huerto*) could mean "orchard" as well. She combines the orchard garden full of fruit with the pleasure garden full of flowers: "it used to give me great joy to think of my soul as a [garden / orchard], and of the Lord walking in it. I would beg Him to increase the fragrance of those little flowers of virtue, which seemed as if they were beginning to bud."[32] In this passage and others, she refers to God as the "Lord" of the garden or as "His Majesty"; in other words, as the royal owner of the garden. In these instances, her vocabulary alludes to a royal or aristocratic pleasure garden, or perhaps to a large kitchen garden designed to furnish dishes for a regal banquet. In evaluating Teresa's garden terminology, we must recall that the gardens she experienced in her lifetime would not have been easily categorized. At the time, some pleasure gardens full of perfumed flowers also contained fruit trees, which were cultivated both for their edible oranges, lemons, and pomegranates and for the fragrances of their fruits and blossoms.[33] A kingly or aristocratic pleasure garden was a display of wealth and power on a grand scale and included such costly features as staircases, pavilions, marble statues, topiary (i.e. the art of trimming shrubs into decorative shapes), geometrically ordered plant beds (*cuadros*), and multiple ornate fountains, the last being an aristocratic garden feature not described by Teresa till the gardens of her *Interior Castle*. It is also possible that in the *Life* Teresa may be fancifully imagining the grand cloister garden of a well-endowed nunnery, such as she chose *not* to imitate in founding her Discalced Carmelite convents.

We can try to guess at Teresa's motives for continually changing the term by which she refers to the type of garden being visualized.

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[31] Teresa of Ávila, *Life* 14.9, p. 101; "Ahora tornemos a nuestra huerta o vergel, y veamos cómo comienzan estos árboles a empreñarse para florecer y dar después fruto, y las flores y claveles lo mesmo para dar olor" (*Vida* 14.9, p. 220).

[32] Teresa of Ávila, *Life* 14.9, p. 101; "[M]e era gran deleite considerar ser mi alma un huerto y al Señor que se paseava en él. Suplicávale aumentase el olor de las florecitas de virtudes que comenzavan" (*Vida* 14.9, p. 220).

[33] Carmen Añón, "Los parámetros del jardín renacentista," *Jardín y naturaleza en el reinado de Felipe II*, ed. Carmen Añón and José Luis Sancho (Madrid, 1998), pp. 44–75, at p. 72.

In *Agua y luz en Santa Teresa*, María Andueza notes that the writer indiscriminately refers to her garden as "la huerta u vergel".[34] According to Andueza, when the kitchen garden (*huerta*) being described suddenly becomes a pleasure garden (*vergel*), it occupies a larger plot of land and thus requires more water.[35] We might also surmise that at times Teresa uses *huerta, huerto* or *vergel* simply for the sake of varying her vocabulary. But ultimately, the term she uses at any one time probably corresponds more to the transitory mystical experience of the moment being narrated rather than to any real garden of logically consistent features. It is also important to note that Teresa's choice of words implicitly argues that even the pleasure garden is only the product of fatiguing labors such as are usually associated with a market garden or orchard. For instance, she uses the word *vergel* (pleasure garden) when describing the effort that the gardener must exert in hauling water by hand till God, the Lord of the orchard, lightens this heavy load through the use of irrigation.[36] Her variable use of the terms *huerta, huerto* and *vergel* expresses the opposition between labor and leisure, between the kitchen garden or practical orchard and the luxurious pleasure garden dedicated to the senses.[37] Historically, the distinction was growing between these garden types. In his *Agricultura de jardines*, Gregorio de los Ríos distinguishes between the practical kitchen garden and flowering pleasure garden, cataloguing which trees and plants should be grown in each.[38] Throughout the *Life,* Teresa emphasizes that only the gardener's great labors can make the barren soil bloom. Curiously, she deliberately neglects the word *jardín*, which could also refer to a pleasure garden but is not so specific as *vergel*. She also ignores the word *pensil*, a term that literally meant a "hanging" or elevated, terraced garden but a word that was also applied to any garden used for pleasure. Perhaps for Teresa and her confessors, the term *pensil* would have too uncomfortably called to mind one of the Seven Wonders of the (Pagan) World, the infamous Hanging Gardens

[34] Teresa of Ávila, *Vida* 14.9, p. 220; *Life* 14.9, p. 101.
[35] María Andueza, *Agua y luz en Santa Teresa* (Mexico City, 1985), p. 95.
[36] Teresa of Ávila, *Vida* 14.1, p. 214.
[37] Maryrica Ortiz Lottman, "Dramatizing Garden Imagination in Baroque Spain," *Gardens and Imagination: Cultural History and Agency*, ed. Michel Conan (Washington, D.C., 2008), pp. 224–42, at pp. 228–230.
[38] Añón, "Los parámetros," p. 72.

of Babylon, a city vilified in the Apocalypse and throughout Christian Europe.[39]

In 16th-century Spain, many women—from both religious and secular walks of life—found temporary freedom in nature within the solitude of the walled garden, and for Teresa this sense of liberating enclosure would have been compounded by the walled garden's location behind the high walls of the convent. All the gardens of Teresa's works are walled spaces, and enclosure plays a key part in her conception of the garden. Moreover, by definition all gardens are walled, according to the understanding of the word "garden" from ancient times and throughout the 16th century. The term "paradise" signifies "walled garden", according to its etymological roots in the Old Persian *pairidaeza*.[40] Early in the *Life,* Teresa tells us that when she entered the convent she discovered a kind of freedom:

> All the [circumstances] of the religious life delighted me. In fact sometimes when I used to sweep the house at hours that I had once spent on my indulgence and adornment, the memory that I was now free from these things gave me a fresh joy, which surprised me, for I could not understand where it came from.[41]

Teresa had been freed from the usual habits of well-off young women, that is, from an obsession with clothes and frivolities, and she considered manual labor a much preferable substitute. As Elizabeth Rhodes points out, at this point in her life, the young Teresa was discovering that by eliminating frivolous distractions, she was now free to fashion a new identity.[42] Teresa does not explicitly state that the convent's cloister and kitchen gardens were among "the [circumstances] of religious life" that held for her an experience of sudden freedom. But we can safely surmise that these green spaces offered her opportunities for both meditation and manual labor and that they served as precincts of great intellectual and artistic freedom. The act of cultivating and

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[39] Maryrica Ortiz Lottman, "The Paradisal Geography of *La mujer que manda en casa,*" *Bulletin of the Comediantes* 60.2 (2008): 41–55.

[40] Christopher Thacker, *The History of Gardens* (Berkeley, 1979), p. 15.

[41] Teresa of Ávila, *Life* 4.2, p. 33; "Dávanme deleite todas las cosas de la relisión, y es verdad que andava algunas veces barriendo en horas que yo solía ocupar en mi regalo y gala, y acordándoseme que estava libre de aquello, me dava un nuevo gozo, que yo me espantava y no podía entender por dónde venía" (*Vida* 4.2, p. 115).

[42] Elizabeth Rhodes, "Seasons with God and the World in Teresa of Ávila's Book," *Studia mystica* 22 (2001): 24–53, at pp. 26–44.

watering the garden provides the central allegory of prayer in the *Life* and enhances her other writings as well.

Teresa the Discalced Carmelite finds freedom in an enclosed garden just as the maiden Melibea does in Fernando de Rojas's *Celestina* (1499)[43] and as do many other Spanish women—both secular and religious, fictional and nonfictional, including the chaste wife Mencía in Pedro Calderón de la Barca's *The Physician of His Honour* (*El médico de su honra*, 1635).[44] In fact, Teresa's sacred enclosed garden can be read in part as a moral correction to the erotic garden inhabited by Melibea. Could Teresa have read of Melibea's erotic joy? Teresa says that she stopped reading profane works shortly after discovering her religious vocation. However, in the same chapter wherein she describes the evil influence of certain youthful companions, she also attests to her love of secular works;[45] and though she may not have read the *Celestina*, her companions may well have whispered its contents.

Throughout her works, Teresa's meditations on the enclosed garden continually play on the notion of macrocosm and microcosm, one space enclosed inside another. Chorpenning explains that in the *Life*, *Interior Castle,* and *The Way of Perfection* (*El camino de la perfección*, 1566),[46] the identical images of Saint Joseph's as a paradise garden, a heaven, and a castle are also applied to the individual soul full of divine grace. The *Life* parallels its analogy of the soul as a garden (chapters 11 to 22) to its analogy of Saint Joseph's Convent as a paradise (chapters 32 to 36). Saint Joseph's becomes a paradise that houses and protects the interior paradise of the soul, while the soul (conversely) reflects and strengthens the convent walls.[47]

The biblical Song of Songs—the origin of much of the Christian imagery of the walled garden—helped inspire Teresa's portrait of the soul as a protected garden. The Christian walled garden is primarily based on the phrase *hortus conclusus* (enclosed garden) from all-important verses in the Song of Songs that include the floral and aquatic

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[43] Fernando de Rojas, *La Celestina,* ed. Dorothy Sherman Severin (Madrid, 1998).

[44] Lottman, "Imagination," p. 230. Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *The Physician of His Honour / El médico de su honra,* trans. Dian Fox and Donald Hindley (Oxford, 2007).

[45] Teresa of Ávila, *Life* 2.1–7, pp. 26–29; *Vida* 2.1–7, pp. 101–07.

[46] Teresa of Ávila, *The Way of Perfection*, ed. and trans. E. Allison Peers (New York, 1964); Teresa of Ávila, *Camino de perfección*, in *Obras completas,* ed. Luis Santullano (Madrid, 1963), pp. 295–388.

[47] Chorpenning, "Monastery," pp. 251–52.

imagery so prevalent in Teresa's gardens: "My sister, my spouse, is a garden enclosed,…a fountain sealed up. / Thy plants are a paradise of pomegranates with the fruits of the orchard… / Spikenard and saffron, sweet cane and cinnamon, with all the trees of Libanus,… / The fountain of gardens: the well of living waters" (4:12–15). The Marian liturgical tradition that descends from these verses provides an intimate, though often unstated, connection between Teresa's convent garden and the highly allegorized, enclosed garden of the Virgin. The Bridegroom of the Song of Songs is traditionally allegorized as Christ, with the Bride being the Church, Mary, or the individual soul.[48] Chorpenning points out that for Teresa, the soul is an enclosed garden where the world is shut out for the purpose of enhancing the joy of the Bride's union with the Bridegroom.[49]

Saint Joseph's Convent would have housed a number of different gardens, all of them enclosed. A simple stone cross marked the center of the cloister garden, and a well stood at the edge of the cloister's north wing.[50] We know that the height of the walls around the largest kitchen garden in the convent was increased on several different occasions,[51] reinforcing the notion of the *hortus conclusus*. Patio gardens were common to the experience of both nuns and secular women. They would have been located inside the houses bought or annexed by the Discalced Carmelite order. Traditionally, the houses of Spain were oriented around a patio, in keeping with Mediterranean practice inherited from the Romans. Those patios, with their wells and potted plants, also served as gardens and provided areas for domestic tasks and relaxation.

In the patristic tradition, the cloister garden was often compared to the garden of Paradise from which humanity was driven out by sin, for monks and nuns inhabited enclosed spaces protected from worldly temptation. The monastery represents a return to this lost ideal. Like the angels who inhabit a celestial landscape, monks are celibate; and in the cloister garden they feed on natural delights such as fresh fruit and spring water. In describing Saint Joseph's Convent, Teresa relies on the metaphor of the monastic garden as a reflection of these longed-for

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[48] Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex*, p. 129.

[49] Teresa of Ávila, *Vida* 36.30, p. 498; *Life* 36.30, p. 276. Quoted in Chorpenning, "Monastery," p. 249.

[50] Cervera Vera, *Complejo*, p. 32.

[51] Cervera Vera, *Complejo*, p. 34.

spaces:[52] "This house is another Heaven, if it be possible to have Heaven upon earth."[53]

In constructing her convents, Teresa looks back to the legendary origin of the Carmelite Order on Mount Carmel, where the followers of the Old Testament prophet Elijah lived as hermits. Mount Carmel's Old Testament Hebrew name, "Hakkarmel," means "the orchard", "the garden" or "the garden-land".[54] Teresa writes that all those women who wear the Carmelite robe imitate the holy fathers of Mount Carmel in their life of solitude, of contempt for worldly matters, and of contemplative prayer.[55] Teresa tells her followers: "For the whole manner of life we are trying to live is making us, not only nuns, but hermits."[56] The Discalced Carmelite sisters strove to imitate the spirit of the early male hermits, though circumstances did not permit them to follow the traditionally masculine activities of their role models. As women, they were required to live in towns and were enclosed in their high-walled convent compounds without access to wild nature like that of Mount Carmel. Moreover, Elijah was associated with preaching, an activity cut off to women. Since the nuns' daily experience could hardly approximate the ancient prophet's, Teresa and other Carmelite women made few allusions to him. They could more readily identify with Mary, the Virgin of Mount Carmel, as a feminine model of spirituality. But the Carmelite sisters did identify with Elijah's interior life, and this inner life always outweighed the importance of exterior circumstances.[57]

Teresa brought to the Carmelite tradition a renewed emphasis on poverty, a social condition based on the proximity to wild nature that Elijah and his followers had experienced on Mount Carmel. The Carmelite hermitages of Spain inspired by Teresa aimed for a direct dialogue with a pristine landscape.[58] The iconography of the prophet Elijah

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[52] Chorpenning, "Monastery," pp. 247, 250.

[53] Teresa of Ávila, *Way of Perfection* 13.7, pp. 86–87; "Esta casa es un cielo, si le puede haber en la tierra" (*Camino* 13.7, p. 322).

[54] C. McGough, "Mount Carmel," in *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C., 2003), 3: 125; "Mount Carmel," *Catholic Encyclopedia*, http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/ > Mount Carmel. Consulted on 23 September 2008.

[55] Teresa of Ávila, *Interior Castle* 5.1.3, pp. 96–97; *Castillo interior* 5.1.3, pp. 301–02.

[56] Teresa of Ávila, *Way of Perfection* 13.6, p. 86; "[E]l estilo que pretendemos llevar es no solo de ser monjas, sino ermitañas" (*Camino* 13.6, p. 322).

[57] Jane Ackerman, *Elijah, Prophet of Carmel* (Washington, D.C., 2003), pp. 203–04.

[58] Fernando R. de la Flor, "El jardín de Yavhé: ideología del espacio eremítico de la contrarreforma," *La cultura del barroco: los jardines (arquitectura, simbolismo y literatura),* ed. José Enrique Laplana Gil (Huesca, 2000), pp. 243–66, at pp. 247–49.

imagines him clothed in goatskin and living in caves in the mountain wilderness.[59] In her writings, Teresa opposes nature with civilization, in step with the Spanish literary practice of showing disdain for the court and praise for the country (*menosprecio de corte y alabanza de aldea*). She seeks to take her followers back to the unspoiled earth found not in grand convents but in lowly hermitages. In *The Way of Perfection,* she states that the convent requires valuable land only so that hermitages can be built and so that each nun will have the solitude necessary for contemplation.[60] According to the Carmelite scholar Jane Ackerman, Teresa inherited the Carmelite spiritual traditions of "solitude, silence, repentance, humility, chastity, purity of heart, and zealous love." Within this tradition, Teresa's innovation was to contribute "a fuller understanding of the poverty that she believed Elijah and the holy fathers experienced on Mt. Carmel."[61] The Carmelite order had always had a vow of poverty. Now Teresa deepened the spirituality of that deprivation. She began to see poverty as an aid to contemplation, and she evoked the lives of Elijah and the early, legendary Carmelites when promoting her reforms.[62] Teresa's Carmelite sisters expressed their desire for proximity to wild nature in various ways: through their labors in shared convent gardens; by cultivating their own small, individually assigned gardens; and by residing in the stone hermitages that imitated the huts on Mount Carmel.

A chain of literary influences links Teresa to Elijah through her intense reading of the garden scenes in Augustine's *Confessions*. In a biography of Saint Antony (the Egyptian hermit), Augustine read that Antony took as his model the spirituality that Elijah practiced in Mount Carmel's garden-like landscape. Augustine's deeply personal response to Antony significantly influenced Teresa.[63] His *Confessions* were published in a Spanish translation for the first time in 1554, the year in which Teresa underwent her own spiritual awakening. She dramatically recalls the scene of Augustine's sudden conversion inside a Milanese garden, when a voice told him to "Take up and read."[64] She

[59] Emiliano Jiménez Hernández, *Elias: lámpara que quema y alumbra* (Rome, 2005), p. 26.
[60] Teresa of Ávila, *Way of Perfection* 2.9, p. 14; *Camino* 2.9, p. 300.
[61] Ackerman, *Elijah*, p. 215.
[62] Ackerman, *Elijah*, pp. 215–19; 221–22.
[63] Ackerman, *Elijah*, pp. 106–07.
[64] Augustine, *Confessions,* ed. and trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford, 1991), 8.12.28–29, pp. 152–53.

tells us: "When I came to the tale of his conversion, and read how he heard the voice in the garden, it seemed exactly as if the Lord had spoken to me."[65] Chorpenning points out the autobiographical similarities between Books 11 to 13 of Augustine's *Confessions* and the garden chapters (11 to 22) of Teresa's *Life*. Each group of chapters constitutes the most purely autobiographical portion of its parent text. Books 11 to 13 of the *Confessions* present us with the persona of Augustine as he was at the time of its composition, when as a bishop he regarded the teaching of scripture as his life's work. Similarly, Chapters 11 to 22 of the *Life* present Teresa as she was when writing the final draft of the book, as the founder of the first reformed Carmelite convent and spiritual guide to her sisters.[66]

As is well known, Teresa's childhood desire for heroism included not only an attempt to die as a martyr in a Muslim country but also a serious game of playing hermit in a garden. She and her brother tried to construct a hermit's shelter, using small stones, but it was pulled down by its own weight.[67] During her adult life the original, approximately 12 hermitages of Saint Joseph's Convent had to be replaced with much smaller numbers after the town called it a threat to the water supply. Though Saint Joseph's occupied a central site within Ávila, it metaphorically provided a wilderness area for hermitages within the city. During Teresa's lifetime, the Discalced Carmelite movement was centered in the towns and cities.[68] Later, beginning in 1592, the Carmelite Tomás de Jesús began to direct the foundation of *desiertos* ("wildernesses") in rural areas of Spain.[69]

The Counter-Reformation hermitage garden differs in many important respects from the cloister garden, exemplifying Teresa's love of poverty and wild nature. The hermitage movement sought to claim architectural space and declare it sacred. The movement was based on a nostalgia for early medieval times.[70] As Fernando R. de la Flor eloquently notes, the hermitage garden existed as a kind of theater

[65] Teresa of Ávila, *Life* 9.8, p. 69; "Cuando llegué a su conversión y leí cómo oyó aquella voz en el huerto, no me parece sino que el Señor me la dio a mí" (*Vida* 9.8, p. 172).
[66] Chorpenning, "Saint Teresa of Ávila as Allegorist," p. 15.
[67] Teresa of Ávila, *Life* 1.6, p. 24; *Vida* 1.6, p. 99.
[68] Bilinkoff, *The Ávila of Saint Teresa*, pp. 146–47.
[69] De la Flor, "El jardín," pp. 255–66.
[70] De la Flor, "El jardín," p. 245.

built to the memory of primitive Christianity.[71] The hermitage garden was dwarfed by the size of the grand old cloister garden. It ideally interfered with nature to a minimal degree, in marked contrast to the well-worked grounds of a medieval cloister. Most importantly, the architectural arrangement of the hermitage inverts the enclosed space of a monastery, for the hermitage's small space dictated that the outdoor space be located outside the building. By contrast, the cloister garden imitated a large patio walled in by the four sides of the cloister.[72]

Under the influence of Elijah, Augustine and her contemporaries, Teresa helped renew the literary gardens of religious tradition. Literary descriptions of the Christian paradise garden predate the 5th century and embellish the features of Eden (Genesis 2–3). They allegorize many of Eden's elements, as when the four rivers of paradise are made to represent the four cardinal virtues or the four evangelists.[73] Carol Slade has interpreted Teresa's short treatise *Meditations on the Song of Songs* (*Conceptos del amor de Dios*, written 1566–71) as part of a feminist argument that the Church's practice of "confining women's experience to the spiritual realm" unfairly denies women their right to help advance humanity in the social one.[74] The garden chapters of Teresa's *Life* contain several notable similarities with the description of the garden of Paradise. God plants each garden, makes the plants grow, and assigns human cultivators. He is present in both gardens and takes delight in them. Lastly, Teresa's four types of watering recall the four rivers of Paradise.[75]

Elizabeth B. Davis has examined how Teresa's *Life* renews specific conventions of the paradise garden. She identifies many points of comparison between the central garden chapters of the *Life* and the Christian gardens of the early Middle Ages.[76] Like the early medieval paradise garden, Teresa's garden is difficult to attain. The early medieval garden, located on a mountaintop, required a difficult ascent, while Teresa's garden must be created from a dry and unweeded patch of

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[71] De la Flor, "El jardín," p. 249.
[72] De la Flor, "El jardín," p. 248.
[73] Jean Delumeau, *A History of Paradise: The Garden of Eden in Myth and Tradition* (New York, 1995), p. 17.
[74] Carol Slade, *Saint Teresa*, pp. 49–57.
[75] Chorpenning, "Teresa of Ávila as Allegorist," p. 13.
[76] For a description of medieval Christian gardens, see Angelo Bartlett Giamatti, *The Earthly Paradise and the Renaissance Epic* (New York, 1989), pp. 67–83.

ground. In both cases, trees produce fruit and flowers simultaneously, instead of successively as in nature. Davis emphasizes that Teresa's garden is a product of intense and consistent daily labor and is not presented as a sudden discovery of a verdant spot beyond the ravages of time. The fragrances of exotic spices such as cinnamon characterized early Christian gardens, but Teresa's flowers emit their heady perfume only after much toil. In the conventional pleasance, springtime reigns eternally; Teresa's gardener, however, cannot maintain the achievement of a paradise garden on a permanent basis. In timeless paradise gardens, all four rivers flow simultaneously, but Teresa's four methods of watering are employed chronologically.[77]

Teresa also made notable changes in adapting key features of the paradise garden of *The Third Spiritual Aphabet* (*Tercer abecedario espiritual*, 1527) by Francisco de Osuna.[78] Early in his book, in the fourth chapter, Osuna compares the human heart to a paradise garden;[79] but only much later, in chapter 18, does he speak at length of watering its soil, as he elaborates on a passage in the Book of Proverbs (5:15–16).[80] Teresa's own garden far outshines Osuna's in complexity and vitality, not only through the abundance of realistic and symbolic details she introduces, but also through her optimistic emphasis on creating and cultivating a garden of love in which God and the soul will take delight.[81] Osuna, on the other hand, pictures a fallen Eden, didactically warning the reader against the wrath of God in this paradise. He meditates vividly and at length on Genesis's dire warning that an angel with a flaming sword guards the road to the tree of life.[82]

Teresa's *Interior Castle* relies on the Renaissance image of heaven as a palace or castle containing a paradise garden. This notion of the celestial garden also appears in the writings of Luis de León and Juan de la Cruz, where in time it becomes increasingly pastoral.[83] In *Interior*

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[77] Davis, "De nuevo," pp. 162–70.

[78] Francisco de Osuna, *The Third Spiritual Alphabet* (New York, 1981); *Tercer abecedario espiritual de Francisco de Osuna,* ed. Saturnino López Santidrián (Madrid, 1998).

[79] Osuna, *The Third Spiritual Alphabet* 4.3, pp. 123–26; *Tercer abecedario* 4.3, pp. 165–68.

[80] Osuna, *The Third Spiritual Alphabet* 18.1, pp. 479–80; *Tercer abecedario* 18.1, pp. 484–85.

[81] Davis, "De nuevo," pp. 165–66.

[82] Osuna, *The Third Spiritual Alphabet* 4.3, pp. 123, 126–27; *Tercer abecedario* 4.3, pp. 165–66, 167–69.

[83] Joseph F. Chorpenning, "The Pleasance, Paradise, and Heaven: Renaissance Cosmology and Imagery in the *Castillo Interior*," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 27.2 (1991): 138–47, at p. 140.

Castle, the soul is symbolized by "both the castle and the individual journey through it." The book's images of the paradise garden, the diamond-like castle, and heaven represent the beauty of the soul's virtue.[84] The original Spanish title, *Las moradas del castillo interior*, is usually rendered into English as *The Mansions of the Interior Castle*, but it literally means *The Dwelling-places Inside the Interior Castle*. Since the Spanish noun *morada* is based on the verb *morar* (to dwell), the literal translation "dwelling-place" suggests not only indoor salons and apartments but also the open-air patios and enclosed gardens within a Mediterranean palace / castle. Moreover, since all castles and palaces contain a garden or gardens, Teresa's castle analogy implicitly compares the soul to a garden, at least to some degree. Teresa borrowed the castle metaphor from Osuna,[85] who twice employs the verb *morar* (to dwell) when declaring that God's visit to the heart of the virtuous man or woman makes that heart an earthly paradise: "The heart of the just is an earthly paradise where the Lord comes to take pleasure, for he says that he delights in *dwelling* with the sons of man. He is also a paradise of delights for us inasmuch as we begin to taste heaven's pleasures in our hearts, especially when God [*dwells*] there."[86]

Numerous allegorical images in the *Castle* relate to gardens. In the initial mansions / *moradas* of the book, Teresa refers to the paradise garden, the tree of life, the spring / water of life, the palm nut, and, of course, sunlight—a primary condition for the eternal springtime of the *locus amoenus*. Recalling the garden imagery of John 4:10–14, she calls the castle "this Orient pearl, this tree of life, planted in the living waters of life—namely, in God."[87] Other natural elements in the *Castle* include the silkworm / butterfly and the images related to betrothal and marriage, again evoking the Song of Songs. Mary Margaret Anderson explains that in the above quotation the pearl serves as a Marian symbol and imagines a return to the "originary, virginal

[84] Chorpenning, "Monastery," p. 255.

[85] Osuna titles one chapter "How You Are to Guard Your Heart Like a Castle" (*The Third Spiritual Alphabet* 4.3, p. 121); "De cómo has de guardar el corazón a manera de castillo" (*Tercer abecedario* 4.3, p. 163).

[86] Osuna, *The Third Spiritual Alphabet* 4.3, p. 124; "El corazón del justo es paraíso terrenal, donde se viene el Señor a deleitar, porque Él dice que sus deleites son morar con los hijos de los hombres…En el corazón comenzamos a gustar el deleite del paraíso, mayormente cuando mora Dios en él" (*Tercer abecedario* 4.3, p. 166). Emphasis mine.

[87] Teresa of Ávila, *Interior Castle* 1.2.1, p. 33; "[E]sta perla oriental, este árbol de vida que está plantado en las mesmas aguas vivas de la vida, que es Dios" (*Castillo* 1.2.1, p. 221).

ground of Eden."[88] In the fifth mansion / *morada*, the spiritual transformation of the soul is imagined as the cocooning and metamorphosis of the silkworm / butterfly. Teresa calls the soul both a moth / butterfly (*mariposa*) and a dove (*paloma*), since during her lifetime (as well as today), Spanish often uses these words interchangeably to refer to the butterfly. Both the butterfly and the dove allude to a flight heavenward. The butterfly appears in spring- and summertime gardens, and the dove, among other birds, has long characterized the *locus amoenus* and celestial gardens.[89] In fact, the appearance of the turtle dove in numerous verses of the Song of Songs[90] fostered its inclusion in the celestial garden tradition. Anderson has recently explicated Teresa's trope of the silkworm / moth as a way of viewing the formation of the soul as "a double and dialectical event that reiterates and reinscribes the act of creation in God's image and through God's word (Gen. 1:1–3, 26–27; John 1:1)."[91]

Teresa's *Interior Castle* is huge in its expanse, with the building including gardens and garden features such as fountains and planted labyrinths that would have required the careful planning of a master gardener as well as the pruning and trimming of many skilled laborers. In her epilogue to the book, she tells us that though her castle contains only seven mansions / *moradas*, "in each one there are . . . beautiful pleasure gardens and fountains and labyrinths."[92] This image of baroque plentitude refers to the infinite variety of individual experiences on the path to virtue and paradise.[93] The castle / palace full of garden features suggests the concept of the garden as a symbol of abundance and infinite variety, as seen in the Spanish practice of naming compilations of texts as gardens. Examples of this type of book title include Alonso de Bonilla's *Nuevo jardin de flores divinas* (1617),[94] Fray Martín de

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[88] Mary Margaret Anderson, "Thy Word in Me: On the Prayer of Union in Saint Teresa of Ávila's *Interior Castle*," *Harvard Theological Review* 99.3 (2006): 329–54, at p. 337.

[89] Chorpenning, "Pleasance," p. 143.

[90] Song of Songs 1:9–10; 2:10, 14; 4:1; and elsewhere.

[91] Anderson, "Thy Word," p. 332.

[92] "Aunque no se trata de más de siete moradas, en cada una de éstas hay muchas: en lo bajo y alto y a los lados, con lindos jardines, y fuentes, y laborintios y cosas tan deleitosas, que desearéis deshaceros en alabanzas del gran Dios que lo crió a su imagen y semejanza" (Epilogue to *Castillo interior*, pp. 461–62). My translation.

[93] Chorpenning, "Monastery," p. 254.

[94] Alonso de Bonilla, *Nuevo jardin de flores divinas, en que se hallara variedad de pensamientos peregrinos* (Baeza, 1617).

Córdoba's 15th-century *Jardin de nobles donzellas*,[95] and Juan de los Ángeles's *Vergel espiritual* (1610).[96]

Secular literary gardens were an important influence on Teresa's *Life*, according to Davis, but the identical influence can just as appropriately be found in the *Interior Castle*; for in the latter book, gardens are located inside a citadel, as in the chivalric novels that were a staple of Teresa's childhood.[97] Teresa undoubtedly read Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo's hugely popular chivalric romance *Amadís de Gaula* (1508), and her depiction of the garden in the *Life* was likely influenced by the description of the paradisal garden inside the castle of Miraflores.[98] *Amadís* also contains many other paradise gardens associated with secular love.[99] In the *Life*, a profession of love occurs immediately prior to the description of the garden, just as it does in *Amadís* during the arrival at the castle of Miraflores. Teresa writes, "Then He will often come to take His pleasure [*holgarse*] in this garden and enjoy these virtues."[100] Davis points out that in this sentence, Teresa's use of the Spanish verb *holgarse* (to rest, to enjoy, to find pleasure in) carries an erotic double meaning, thereby situating her within the long-established tradition of employing the vocabulary of human passion to express religious zeal.[101] In her autobiography, Teresa also employs the vocabulary of courtly love when she opens the important allegorical chapters of watering the garden with the words: "Now to speak of those who are beginning to be the servants of love…"[102] The word *siervo*, from the Latin *servus* (meaning slave), expresses the lover's total devotion to the beloved. In the context of this allegorical segment of the *Life*, the word evokes the courtly love tradition rooted in the allegorical gardens of the Middle Ages, including the 13th-century *Romance of the Rose*.[103] Such fantastic and elaborate gardens were

[95] Martín de Córdoba, *Jardín de nobles donzellas*, ed. Harriet Goldberg (Chapel Hill, 1974).

[96] Juan de los Ángeles, *Vergel espiritual* (Madrid, 1610).

[97] Teresa of Ávila, *Life* 2.1, p. 26; *Vida* 2.1, pp. 101–02.

[98] Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo, *Amadís de Gaula*, ed. Juan Manuel Cacho Blecua (Madrid, 1991), vol. 1, book 2, ch. 53, p. 753.

[99] Davis, "De nuevo," pp. 162–65.

[100] Teresa of Ávila, *Life* 11.6, p. 78; "[Y] ansí se venga a deleitar muchas veces a esta huerta y a holgarse entre estas virtudes" (*Vida* 11.6, p. 187).

[101] Davis, "De nuevo," pp. 166–67.

[102] Teresa of Ávila, *Life* 11.1, p. 76; "Pues hablando ahora de los que comienzan a ser siervos de el amor" (*Vida* 11.1, p. 183).

[103] Giamatti, *Earthly Paradise*, pp. 48–67; Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, trans. Frances Horgan (Oxford, 1994).

familiar to medieval nuns, who read in them not only a moralistic warning about the loss of Eden, but also the hope of a just reward in the celestial paradise.

We have seen that walled gardens dominate the central, allegorical chapters of Teresa's *Life*. They also inspired Teresa of Ávila while she composed such works as the *Interior Castle*. The allegorical chapters of the *Life* focus on the humble tasks of the gardener-laborer, but the garden itself could be either a royal pleasure garden or a mere kitchen garden or orchard. Teresa's experience of real garden forms—the domestic patio, the cloister garden, the hermitage garden, and others—led her to experiment with the conventions of Christian literary and iconographic traditions, as well as to improve upon the meditative garden of her contemporary, Francisco de Osuna. As a child she had fantasized about presiding over a hermitage. As an adult, she stipulated that the number of nuns in any one convent be kept low, thus ensuring her sisters the opportunity to experience gardens as their sole earthly inhabitants. Alluding to the Song of Songs, she speaks of limiting the convent's sisters to 13 for the benefit of "those who wish to enjoy the company of their Bridegroom, Christ, in solitude."[104] A garden was evidently the setting she had in mind.

[104] Teresa of Ávila, *Life* 36.6, p. 276; "[L]as que a solas quisieren gozar de su esposo Cristo. Que esto es siempre lo que han de pretender; y solas con Él solo, y no ser más de trece" (*Vida* 36.6, p. 498 and note 39).

HOME, SWEET HOME: TERESA DE JESÚS, *MUDÉJAR* ARCHITECTURE, AND THE PLACE OF MYSTICISM IN EARLY MODERN SPAIN

María Mercedes Carrión

> Hence the mystics do not reject the ruins that surround them. They remain there. They go there.
>
> —Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable*

Mysticism is seldom discussed in terms of the material conditions of the site where it takes place, or how such experience and practice corresponds to space, location, or other architectural premises.[1] In 1982 Michel de Certeau initiated a dialogue about place and space in what he termed "the mystic fable", dwelling on such concepts as the mystic circle, redistribution of space, the refuge, places to lose oneself (the monastery, the public square, the garden), and the foundations of the mystic sign.[2] De Certeau's essay ventures, in fact, into a most vexed area of the study of mysticism: the negotiation of spatial grounds with a journey otherwise largely understood as ineffable, incorporeal, and spiritual. The following words by Teresa de Jesús[3] illustrate the complexity of this point:

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[1] This study is part of a chapter of a book project titled *Teresa de Jesús and the Place of Mystical Rendition*, in which I seek to recover the original spaces of the 17 convents reformed by De Jesús in an attempt to understand the space shared by her place of mysticism with *mudéjar* and other strands of architecture representing transconfessional and transcultural expressions in early modern Spain.

[2] Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable*, Vol. 1: *The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, trans. Michael B. Smith (Chicago, 1982), pp. 3–13, 17–72, and 188–200.

[3] Teresa de Jesús, 16th-century mystic, writer, and reformer of the Carmelite order in Spain, is the author of four treatises published as the *Book of Life* (*Libro de la vida*, 1652), the *Way of Perfection* (*Camino de perfección*, 1562–64), the *Interior Castle* (*Castillo interior*, 1577), and the *Book of Foundations* (*Libro de las fundaciones*, 1573–82). All references to her written works in the present essay are drawn from the *Complete Works of Saint Teresa of Jesus*, trans. E. Allison Peers (London, 1946), and will be cited with the title of the book by De Jesús, the volume, and the page number of origin. Each reference will be followed by the Spanish original drawn from De Jesús's *Obras completas*, ed. Efrén de la Madre de Dios and Otger Steggink (Madrid, 1986), and will be cited at the end of the quotation with the title of the book and the page number in the *Obras completas* where the passage can be found.

> O God, how little have buildings and outward comforts to do with the inward life of the soul! For love of Him I beg you, my sisters and fathers, never to be other than very modest in this matter of large and sumptuous houses. Let us bear in mind our true founders, those holy Fathers from whom we are descended, for we know it was the road of poverty and humility which they took that led them to the fruition of God.[4]

To convey to readers the indescribable "inward life of the soul" (*lo interior*) and the ultimate aspiration and achievement of the "fruition of God" (*gozo de Dios*), De Jesús's *Book of Foundations* prescribes modesty in the presence and meaning of the "large and sumptuous houses" (*casas grandes y suntuosas*) that emerged during the 16th and 17th centuries in Spain.[5] Critics reading this passage and numerous others in which the Carmelite nun inscribes architectural images have read these signs at face value and concluded that her brand of mysticism negates the physical world, and that references to architecture mean little more than background noise—a mere ancillary sign on the

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[4] De Jesús, *Foundations*, 3: 65; "¡Oh, válame Dios, qué poco hacen estos edificios y regalos esteriores para lo interior! Por su amor os pido, hermanas y padres míos, que nunca dejéis de ir muy moderados en esto de casas grandes y suntuosas. Tengamos delante nuestros fundadores verdaderos, que son aquellos santos padres de donde descendimos, que sabemos que por aquel camino de pobreza y humildad gozan de Dios" (De Jesús, *Fundaciones*, p. 720).

[5] De Jesús was familiar with this kind of house because she spent over half a year in the palace of Luisa de la Cerda in Toledo, which (as María Pilar Manero Sorolla notes) "stood out among more than sixty noble dwellings not only for its magnificence and architectural exuberance—which combined Mozarabic, Mudejar, Gothic, and plateresque styles—but also for being one of Toledo's most influential" (María Pilar Manero Sorolla, "On the Margins of the Mendozas: Luisa de la Cerda and María de San José [Salazar]," in *Power and Gender in Renaissance Spain: Eight Women of the Mendoza Family, 1450–1650*, ed. Helen Nader [Urbana and Chicago, 2004], p. 115). This building, where De Jesús composed most of her *Book of Life* while on leave from the Convent of La Encarnación in Ávila, sat atop the highest hill in Toledo. Manero Sorolla describes it as the site of a small court "frequented by highborn ladies of the upper nobility and even royalty" (Manero Sorolla, "On the Margins," p. 115). De Jesús no doubt referred to these palatial edifices, most of which were built anew or over the remnants of previous manors in order to house those in positions of authority and power: the palace of Charles V in the Alhambra, Granada; the palace-monastery of Philip II in San Lorenzo del Escorial, Madrid; and the numerous palaces and princely houses that populated the architectural halls of the Peninsula during these two centuries. The bibliography on this subject matter is vast, so I merely name a few introductory studies: Barbara von Barghahn, *Age of Gold, Age of Iron: Renaissance Spain and Symbols of Monarchy* (Lanham, Maryland, 1985); Helen Nader, *The Mendoza Family in the Spanish Renaissance* (New Brunswick, 1979); Earl E. Rosenthal, *The Palace of Charles V in Granada* (Princeton, 1985); George Kubler, *Building the Escorial* (Princeton, 1982); and Jonathan Brown and John H. Elliott, *A Palace for a King: The* Buen Retiro *and the Court of Philip V* (New Haven, 2003).

"road of poverty and humility" (*camino de pobreza y humildad*) necessary to achieve the desired union with God.[6] Be that as it may, the rambling houses which this passage dismisses so vocally are inscribed (phantasmatically chiseled, one might argue) in the memory-stone of the books and convents she designed, built, and published—a fact which suggests that they may not be a mere stage prop in the scenario of the journey written and built by De Jesús.[7] Instead, I argue, they represent spaces where the expression "home, sweet home" finds great resonances of irony, peace, centeredness, exile, and return.

In her mystical treatises and reformed convents, De Jesús negotiates modesty with largeness, austerity with splendor, interiority with exteriority.[8] To articulate these stepping-stones in the ascent to mystical

[6] A few studies have read the architectural sign of the *Interior Castle* as a symbolic rendition of actual fortifications such as the walls of the city of Ávila or the Castle of Mota in Medina del Campo; among them, Robert Ricard, "Le symbolisme du *Château intérieur* chez Sainte Thérèse," *Bulletin hispanique* 67 (1965): 25–41, and Trueman Dicken, "The Imagery of the *Interior Castle* and its Implications," *Ephemerides Carmeliticae* 21 (1970): 198–218. Other scholars have advanced interpretations of the castle as an allegory, a phallic tower and its feminist deconstruction, a house of *catachresis*, and a memory theater, among many others: Catherine Swietlicki, "The Problematic Iconography of Teresa of Avila's *Interior Castle*," *Studia mystica* 11.3 (1988): 37–47; Víctor García de la Concha, *El arte literario de Santa Teresa* (Barcelona, 1978); and Michael Gerli, "El *Castillo interior* y el arte de la memoria," *Bulletin hispanique* 86.1–2 (1982): 154–63. For a broader bibliography on this subject matter, see María Mercedes Carrión, *Arquitectura y cuerpo en la figura autorial de Teresa de Jesús* (Barcelona, 1994), pp. 17–22 and 233–81. Miguel Norbert Ubarri has published a key study on space in the mystical works of Juan de la Cruz where he considers, among others, the seven mansions, the door, the prison, the inner cellar, the grapevines, the garden and its wall, the flowerbed or *tálamo*, the flame, and the caves (Miguel Norbert Ubarri, *Las categorías de espacio y tiempo en San Juan de la Cruz* [Madrid, 2001], pp. 257–96).

[7] Doña Teresa de Cepeda y Ahumada (1515–82) is better known as Saint Teresa of Ávila, but she is also called by a few other names. She insisted on being called Teresa de Jesús after she professed as a Carmelite nun. In accordance with usual practice among brothers and sisters of religious orders in Spain at that time, she renounced her legal given name to favor this adopted appellation. Teresa de Jesús is also the name she stamped on her legal and literary signature; hence, the present essay uses this nomenclature ("De Jesús" hereafter). For further points on the need to refer with precision to this authorial figure in order to understand the complex referential network of irony, didacticism, obedience, humility, and authority built by De Jesús in her literary texts, see Carrión, *Arquitectura y cuerpo*, pp. 43–67.

[8] Besides her extensive literary *oeuvre*, De Jesús founded 17 convents in Spain. These houses, as per her design, were a critical component of a program of religious reform which she significantly endowed with the principles and practices of mysticism. The previously cited *Book of Foundations* is the best account of the conventual reform. Jodi Bilinkoff offers an overview of the context in which De Jesús initiated this reform in the city of Ávila (Jodi Bilinkoff, *The Avila of Saint Teresa: Religious Reform in a Sixteenth-Century City* [Ithaca, 1989]).

union, she incorporates architectural signs in her texts with which she qualifies, redefines, and clarifies notions of architecture—but she neither forgets nor dismisses them. With this textual strategy, De Jesús makes such signs a key to understanding her representation of the spiritual, ineffable, and incorporeal journey toward mystical union. After all, in contrast with the "buildings and outward comforts" (*edificios y regalos esteriores*) mentioned above, the Carmelite nun stages a different kind of place of mysticism, the object of this essay's critical desire. I am referring to what she terms places "where there has seemed to be no kind of physical comfort at all," which by virtue of the subject's remembrance, acceptance, and consciousness become "the mansions we shall inhabit"—the *home, sweet home* of mystical union.[9] Seeking to expand the reception of De Jesús's works beyond that of mere products of religious orthodoxy written by a venerable saint, and in order to appreciate her deployment of a most persuasive place of mysticism, I propose a comparative reading which underscores the correspondences between architectural signs present in *mudéjar* traditions and in two of her mystical treatises (the *Book of Life* and the *Book of Foundations*). These places share a remarkable capacity to survive by means of versatility and adaptation, by moving skillfully between contradictory terms and warring credos.

The mystic fable composed by De Jesús deploys architecture in order to build a physical (literal) and spiritual (figurative) space of artistic and religious polysemia. In De Certeau's apt words, De Jesús sought to build the place of mysticism to escape being a "scorned one", simultaneously striving to free herself "from the formalism of the Synagogue", the Mosque, and the Church as she was "seduced by the Erasmian conception of an evangelical 'body' that transcended the constraining limits of the racist doctrines of *limpieza de sangre*."[10] As I have argued elsewhere, the theories and practices of architecture published and built in the Middle East, North Africa, and Italy—all of which moved into Spain as a result of a difficult, antagonistic, and (more frequently than not) violent process of transculturation—had

[9] De Jesús, *Foundations*, 3: 65–66. These 'places' in the Spanish version are represented as spaces determined by a temporal frame, perhaps in reference to the weakness of human flesh "cuando parece que no tienen los cuerpos cómo estar acomodados" and to the futurity of the mystical union: "más gozaremos aquella eternidad, adonde son las moradas" (De Jesús, *Fundaciones*, p. 720).

[10] De Certeau, *The Mystic Fable*, pp. 21–23.

a profound impact on the theories and practices of architecture in 16th-century Spain.[11] Despite the physical and philosophical borders of architecture (ideology, gravity, rootedness, mooring, weight, stasis), Spanish theoreticians and practitioners of this area of knowledge defied such borders through a process of cultural dynamics closely related to that of mysticism: they did not reject the ruins surrounding them, as the epigraph by De Certeau says; rather, they remained there, they went there. *Home, sweet home*. As a result, they recolonized the ruins, appropriated the spaces of the colonized and adapted the new designs to their surviving splendor and enlightenment. They remembered inner courtyards which had made the center of a building an eloquent sign; weathered cold and heat to insist on fusing interiors and exteriors; made their buildings a true palimpsest by once again having rooms relate their design to function; and learned to play with the supply and demand of water (an art whose memory is sadly being lost these days). The spirit or "that who speaks" in mysticism, according to De Certeau, is "in search of a place, as vacant space, after the manner of the phantoms whose anxiety, while waiting to find a place of habitation, is told in the traditional legends of fantasy novels."[12] In Spain this place of mysticism was also the place of architecture where mystics, artists and builders imagined and built transconfessional, transcultural spaces. I am not arguing that architecture and mysticism were one and the same in 16th-century Spain; neither is the goal of this essay to attach a *mudéjar* label to the literary and architectural works of De Jesús, nor to arrive at a final definition of this category. Rather, I am invested in proposing an angle of reading that sees *mudéjar* architecture as a figurative cornerstone of the place of mysticism represented in and by her texts.

It may seem futile to use the expression "*mudéjar* architecture" at a time when it has been redefined to a point of uselessness. Coined during the culminating stage of production of romanticized versions of Spain's early modern past, *mudéjar* retains for many users a host of problematic meanings that reinstate the religious and cultural wars of the Peninsula between the 8th and the 20th centuries—such as the assumption of absolute Christian domination over Islamic or Jewish communities. As María Judith Feliciano and Leyla Rouhi have noted,

[11] Carrión, *Arquitectura y cuerpo*, pp. 69–121.
[12] De Certeau, *The Mystic Fable*, p. 189.

the subservient position of Islamic and Jewish peoples under Christian state control, especially after 1492, is an undeniable fact; that notwithstanding, they cogently add, "it is equally difficult to assert that the arm of the nascent state provided the only configuration of power in the peninsula."[13] Feliciano and Rouhi note that, as a result, readers of *mudéjar objets d'art* frequently interpret them as the result of "a phenomenon founded on an indissoluble conundrum: the combination (or, perhaps, juxtaposition) of 'Muslim' and 'Christian' religions, literatures, aesthetics, and values, and the consistent preference for this combination exhibited by Christian patrons throughout the later medieval period", usually not questioning the meaning of these terms of religious engagement or what they mean in relation to artistic processes.[14] The lack of critical analysis of the labels "Christian-," "Islamic-" and "Jewish art" (whatever those terms may mean) has ultimately led many to ignore what Feliciano, Rouhi and others see as key elements of *mudéjar* cultural production (which this essay insists on remembering): survival, hybridity, transition, and relative power of one ethnic / religious / cultural group.[15]

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[13] María Judith Feliciano and Leyla Rouhi, "Introduction: Interrogating Iberian Frontiers," *Medieval Encounters* 12.3 (2006): 317–28, at p. 325.

[14] Feliciano and Rouhi, "Introduction," p. 317. Pilar Mogollón examines the intersection of Islamic and Christian coexistence, convergence, and conflict as evidence of the assimilation of the two poles as an artistic whole in Extremadura during the 12th and 13th centuries (Pilar Mogollón, "Manifestations of Power and Visual Culture: Some Examples in Extremaduran *Mudéjar* Architecture," *Medieval Encounters* 12.3 [2006]: 341–59). Cynthia Robinson reads the naturalistic ornamentation of *mudéjar* architecture and reveals new ways in which artists deployed trees as polysemic signs to produce joy and a closer relationship with God and the Virgin (Cynthia Robinson, "Trees of Love, Trees of Knowledge: Toward the Definition of a Cross-confessional Current in Late Medieval Iberian Spirituality," *Medieval Encounters* 12.3 [2006]: 388–435).

[15] Language, identity, devotion, university curricula, and religiosity are many areas in which recent research has demonstrated the value of considering these "third spaces", to quote Homi Bhabha with Feliciano and Rouhi. See María Ángeles Gallego, "The Languages of Medieval Iberia and Their Religious Dimension," *Medieval Encounters* 9.1 (2003): 107–39; Consuelo López-Morillas, "Language and Identity in Late Spanish Islam," *Hispanic Review* 63.2 (1995): 193–210; John Dagenais, "Mulberries, Sloe Berries; or, Was Doña Endrina a *Mora*?," *Modern Language Notes* 107.2 (1992): 396–405; Luce López-Baralt and Reem Iversen, *A zaga de tu huella: la enseñanza de las lenguas semíticas en Salamanca en tiempos de San Juan de la Cruz* (Madrid, 2006); Cynthia Robinson, "*Mudéjar* Revisited: A Prolegómena to the Reconstruction of Perception, Devotion, and Experience at the *Mudéjar* Convent of Clarisas, Tordesillas, Spain (Fourteenth Century A.D.)," *Res* 43 (Spring 2003): 51–77; and María del Mar Rosa-Rodríguez, "Simulation and Dissimulation: Religious Hybridity in a *Morisco Fatwa*" (*Medieval Encounters*, 16.1 [2010]: 143–80).

De Jesús inscribes these elements of *mudéjar* art in three architectural models: the house (the childhood abode and the convent), the palace, and the castle.[16] The last two mobilize the historical memory of al-Andalus in monumental terms, offering readers spectacular renditions of the place of mysticism that evoke a variety of religious and spiritual traditions, such as Augustine of Hippo's *Confessions*, the seven concentric palaces of the Sufi traditions, and the protean allegorical systems of love castles and courtly love shared by European and Middle Eastern traditions.[17] The house, on the other hand, offers readers a particular spectrum of mystical meanings that will be the focus of the remainder of this essay. The sign of the house, as Luis Avilés has pointed out in his study of Cervantes's exemplary novel *El celoso extremeño* (The Jealous Extremaduran), "constantly displaces itself from one signifier to another" and represents a dwelling in the world which—unlike architectural signs that refer to hostility, power, war, titles of nobility, and combat—represents protection and psychological integrity.[18] For De Jesús, in a process similar to that occurring with *mudéjar* art, the protection and integrity of subjects persecuted

[16] These three architectural models relate in one way or another to a variety of iconographic renditions of the space of the garden, which also mobilizes transconfessional images of devotion such as the Garden of Eden in the Book of Genesis of the Judeo-Christian tradition, the *hortus conclusus* associated with Marianism, and the gardens of classical Arabic exemplary poetry represented in the *Nûnîhah* or poem in "nûn" rhyme by Ibn Zaydûn. De Certeau analyses the roles played by absence, withdrawal, lettered bodies, and dead-end paths in the mystic fable of Hieronymus Bosch's delirious and delectable rendition of the garden (De Certeau, *The Mystic Fable*, pp. 49–72). For De Jesús the figure of the garden is a key sign in the iconographic inscription of the place of mysticism in her narratives, remembering in rather precise terms various poetic and architectural spaces from al-Andalus. For an analysis of how this textual strategy is developed in the *Book of Life*, see María Mercedes Carrión, "Amor a Dios, por amor al arte: arquitectura e iconografía en la narrativa de Teresa de Jesús," in *La mística española y las ínsulas extrañas*, ed. Luce López-Baralt (Madrid, forthcoming).

[17] The palace appears as a sign that facilitates the recovery from a fallen state (most particularly the sin and forgetfulness plaguing the *Book of Life*) and opens up the reactivation of memory in rambling spaces where there is no clutter and no obstacle to the beginning of the mystical journey; see Carrión, *Arquitectura y cuerpo*, pp. 161–205. The castle, on the other hand, is filled with artful designs composed from great strokes of allegory, courtly love, desire and *ars memorativa*, a monumental dwelling of piety and devotion evoking textual strategies of al-Andalus; see María Mercedes Carrión, "Scent of a Mystic Woman: Teresa de Jesús and the *Interior Castle*," *Medieval Encounters* 15 (2009): 130–56, at pp. 141–46.

[18] Luis F. Avilés, "*Fortaleza tan guardada*: casa, alegoría y melancolía en *El celoso extremeño*," *Cervantes: Bulletin of the Cervantes Society of America* 18.1 (1998): 71–95, at p. 72.

and / or prosecuted after 1492 (as was the case with her ancestors and herself) surface in the writing of domestic space not as a place of submission, but as a site of survival for memories otherwise prohibited.[19]

The Houses of the *Book of Life*, Spaces of Remembrance and Survival

In the *Book of Life* De Jesús remembers in highly encoded manner the struggles of her family to legally and publicly substitute for their abject *converso* lineage an accepted state of *hidalguía* (nobility, gentlemanliness, or honor). The first chapters of the *Life* speak of her father's and mother's virtue and the loving network that her brothers and sisters formed around her; she, on the other hand—the product of such perfect caregivers—is sinful, diseased, and at a certain point, given up for dead. This split in the household, evocative of Augustine of Hippo's "I was a house divided against myself" in the *Confessions*, reveals De Jesús's knowledge of the benefits of having a family with *limpieza de sangre* (clean blood), even if one was a sinner. Given the formidable pressure the Inquisitorial surveillance apparatus was capable of exercising over those suspected of heresy, one could imagine that the traumatic memory of her family's lawsuit to claim *hidalguía* was still present when she was over 40, her approximate age when she began writing and reforming Carmelite convents.[20] In 1613 her confessor

[19] Father Tomás Álvarez notes that De Jesús's father, uncles, brothers and cousins initiated a lawsuit in 1519 "to cover the social inconvenience of their Jewish or judaizing (*judaizante*) lineage" (Tomás Álvarez, "Santa Teresa de Ávila en el drama de los judeo-conversos castellanos," in *Judíos, sefarditas, conversos: la expulsión de 1492 y sus consecuencias*, ed. Ángel Alcalá [Valladolid, 1995], pp. 609–30, at p. 610; my translation). Teófanes Egido has published the most comprehensive study of the text of the lawsuit located in the Archivo de la Real Chancillería de Valladolid (Teófanes Egido, *El linaje judeoconverso de Santa Teresa: pleito de hidalguía de los Cepeda* [Madrid, 1986]). The persecution suffered by De Jesús is recorded in depositions and other court documents used in the preparation of an Inquisition case (charging Illuminism) against her that was never legalized. Enrique Llamas Martínez compiled these in a thorough study titled *Santa Teresa de Jesús y la Inquisición española* (Madrid, 1972).

[20] A powerful conglomerate of informants (*familiares*), commissioners, prison guards, judges, and other staff constituted the Inquisition, the premier agency involved in the process of policing the adherence of every subject to Catholic dogma. During the 16th century the Inquisition set the rhetorical, legal, and political parameters for many of these ideologies. See the studies by Ángel Alcalá, Miguel Avilés, María Victoria González de Caldas, Jaime Contreras, and Virgilio Pinto Crespo in the volume *The Spanish Inquisition and the Inquisitorial Mind*, ed. Ángel Alcalá (Boulder, 1987).

Father Jerónimo Gracián stated that he had tested De Jesús about her lineage, telling her that he had found out that she came from one of the noblest families in Ávila: "she was very mad at me," said Gracián, "for thinking about that, and she said that for her the only thing that mattered was that she was a daughter of the Catholic Church, and that she regretted more to have committed a venial sin than to be the descendant of the vilest, lowest peasants and converts in the whole world."[21] If one reads this confession at face value, the inscription of Jewish or Muslim traditions in her texts—considered heretical practices, a capital offense to the church—made no sense in texts intended to be read publicly.[22] After all, as Gracián's statement for the canonization proceedings reveals, descending from converts was not something she was going to spend energy regretting. This assertion could be read as a disavowal of her lineage, especially in the context of the previous clause: "for her the only thing that matters was that she was a daughter of the Catholic Church." However, taking confessions from persecuted subjects at face value can misfire. For instance, the stipulation that she was "a daughter of the Catholic Church" yields ample room for irony, given that such was the stamp with which prosecuted subjects would be labeled after conversion, and that De Jesús reiterated it frequently. Readers must also acknowledge that any repudiation of her past entailed a paradoxical reference: prosecuted subjects, like the Cepedas, could only speak in public of their desire to establish themselves as *hidalgos*.

Framing De Jesús in a strictly orthodox, antagonistic frame towards religious minorities of 16th-century Spain would render her weaving of spatial images with Hebraic, Islamic, and Christian traditions

[21] "…se enojó mucho conmigo porque trataba de esto, diciendo que le bastaba ser hija de la Iglesia Católica; y que más le pesaba de haber hecho un pecado venial, que si fuera descendiente de los más viles y bajos villanos y confesos de todo el mundo" (quoted in Álvarez, "Santa Teresa de Ávila en el drama de los judeo-conversos castellanos," p. 613, n. 15; my translation).

[22] This contradiction can be better understood within the context of what Alex Novikoff terms the "historiographic enigma" of the relations among Muslims, Jews, and Christians. This enigma offers "a unique opportunity for testing theories of interfaith relations and social interaction" (Alex Novikoff, "Between Tolerance and Intolerance in Medieval Spain: An Historiographic Enigma," *Medieval Encounters* 11.1–2 [2005]: 7–36, at p. 7). As Novikoff notes, citing from Thomas Glick, the relations between these warring factions were forged as "processes of 'acculturation and socio-evolutionary change' experienced by subjects belonging to these neighboring and competing groups" (Novikoff, "Between Tolerance and Intolerance," p. 30).

meaningless; even if there is no such thing as separate "Islamic-", "Jewish-", or "Christian art" (a logical hypothesis), any sole identification of her mysticism with Christian ideologies (other than, perhaps, compliance in the face of the Inquisition) forecloses the data in her texts, which say otherwise.[23] The references to her family house, then, can best be understood in the context of the politics and poetics of ruins with which she remembered the broken past of her family, her monastic order, and Spain in order to further a path of survival in her mystical life. Her favoring of extasis over stasis and placing the ethnic and religious "other" at home—not controlled by means of expulsion or castigation—was a discourse virtually unimaginable in public during her lifetime, especially for a descendant of *conversos* and a monastic reformer whose work was being scrutinized by the Holy Office of the Inquisition.

In the *Life* the architectural tenor is one of ruinous conditions, beginning with the little play houses she and her brother used to put together in their family home in Gotarrendura: "and in a garden that we had in our house, we tried as we could to make hermitages piling up some little stones which afterwards would quickly fall down again. And so in nothing could we find a remedy for our desire."[24] The transitional and contradictory movement of the "little stones" (*pedrecillas*) stacking up and falling down denotes an uncanny foresight into the future life that De Jesús would lead in the convent of La Encarnación, a rambling mansion with many physical and institutional flaws where De Jesús first professed as a nun and later spent 27 years.[25] The little

[23] See Luce López-Baralt, *San Juan de la Cruz y el Islam* (Madrid, 1990); Luce López-Baralt, *Asedios a lo indecible: San Juan de la Cruz canta al éxtasis transformante* (Madrid, 1998); Colin P. Thompson, *The Poet and the Mystic: A Study of the* Cántico espiritual *of San Juan de la Cruz* (Oxford, 1977); and María Mercedes Carrión, "'En el más profundo centro': San Juan de la Cruz y el espacio sagrado," *Revista San Juan de la Cruz*, XXIV 42 (2008): 25–48. López-Baralt and Iversen (*A zaga de tu huella*) have analysed the impact of the Arabic language's capacity to mean (by virtue of its combinatory tendencies) on Juan de la Cruz's poetry, a point which I have argued can be found in the architectural signs of De Jesús (Carrión, "Scent of a Mystic Woman," pp. 146–49).

[24] De Jesús, *Life*, 1: 34; "Y en una huerta que havía en casa procurávamos, como podíamos, hacer ermitas, puniendo unas pedrecillas, que luego se nos caían, y ansí no hallávamos remedio en nada para nuestro deseo" (De Jesús, *Vida*, p. 35).

[25] The Augustinian convent of Nuestra Señora de Gracia where De Jesús first joined monastic life was small, with narrow windows and a suffocating cloister. La Encarnación, on the contrary, had the proportions of a rambling house, but the convent was overpopulated and the rule relaxed. I have analysed the correspondences of these two

piles of stones built with her brother prefigure what would become, in slow motion, the longest story of her life: almost three decades of fighting for her spiritual and physical health.[26]

The building of La Encarnación experienced a wrenching struggle for meaning during its period of Christian patrons in the 16th century, a parallel event to the editorializing of the Jewish lineage of the Cepedas and De Jesús's peeling back of sinful layers. The Carmelite Order—where the two defective bodies of De Jesús and La Encarnación belonged institutionally—originated in the 12th century in Wadi ain es Siah, a region with strong ties to Judaism.[27] Dating from a time when Judeo-Christian traditions on Iberian soil stood in uneasy opposition to—but institutionalized exclusion of—each other (as they would be after 1492), this origin of the order resurfaced in the inauguration of La Encarnación in 1515, the very year De Jesús was born. As Nicolás González demonstrates, the convent was inaugurated on a site where Bishop Alonso de Fonseca had consecrated a church to replace a synagogue and an *osario de judíos*, both expropriated in 1480.[28] This detail, well known to the nuns living in the monastery, was edited from the collective memory to become a past history of abjection which, in order to erect the Catholic congregation, had to

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spaces and the autobiographical and literary dimensions of the *Book of Life* in Carrión, *Arquitectura y cuerpo*, pp. 128–37.

[26] The "little stones" of this passage could be interpreted as a sign of *mudéjar* design, evocative of the "style" of brick architecture; however, as Gonzalo Borrás Gualis notes, "not all the medieval Spanish brick architecture is mudejar, nor is all mudejar architecture built of brick" (Gonzalo Borrás Gualis, "Mudejar: An Alternative Architectural System in the Castilian Urban Repopulation Model," *Medieval Encounters* 12.3 [2006]: 329–40, at p. 332). This passage may also refer to the process of assimilation of languages, functions, and spaces of architecture common in the Crown of Castille and al-Andalus. Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza identifies this assimilation with multicultural architectural production after 1492; a key point in such production, as Ruiz Souza says, was the fact that "monasteries, convents, and palaces were founded and built directly over abandoned or empty Nasrid buildings, many of which were deliberately and conscientiously preserved well into the twentieth century, some of them surviving to this day" (Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza, "Architectural Languages, Functions, and Spaces: The Crown of Castile and al-Andalus," *Medieval Encounters* 12.3 [2006]: 360–87, at p. 367).

[27] See Elías Friedman, *The Latin Hermits of Mount Carmel: A Study in Carmelite Origins* (Rome, 1979); and Elías Friedman, "Stella Maris: convento y santuario en el Monte Carmelo," *Monte Carmelo* 94 (1986): 419–36.

[28] Nicolás González, *El monasterio de la Encarnación de Ávila*, 2 vols (Ávila, 1976), p. 61.

be neutralized and archived.[29] De Jesús lived uncomfortably ever after in this convent; and although she agreed to be its mother superior at a certain point, she did not support the imposition of erasure on its past. Instead she initiated a monastic and literary reform that insisted on the critical meaning of interiors, with words that recovered (instead of obliterating) such memories.

The negotiation of this vexed past and proscribed, hybrid present at La Encarnación translated in her *Life* into a preoccupation with the question of cloister for women:

> That's why it seems to me it did me great harm not to be in an enclosed monastery. For the freedom that those who were good were able to enjoy in good conscience (for they were not obligated to more, since they did not make the vow of enclosure) would have certainly brought me, who am so wretched, to hell, if the Lord with so many remedies and means and with His very special favors had not drawn me out of this danger.[30]

The openness of the convent allowed income and relief for the institution, since many women were sent away when there was not sufficient food; but it also represented a distraction from prayer and contemplation that, for De Jesús, was not in agreement with monastic life. The architectural largesse of La Encarnación was an incentive for the narrative voice's wretchedness, which would eventually lead her to hell—an architectural masterpiece where the "bad architects" place her, as we shall see in a moment.

In frank opposition to these vast spatial proportions stands the first convent that De Jesús reformed: San José, a house of very modest proportions which would become her definitive home. As Beatriz Blasco Esquivias has noted, the original design of San José reflected "the proverbial austerity and poverty" that would become a signature of the convents reformed by De Jesús.[31] The original convent of San José was

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[29] *Libro de elecciones* (uncatalogued manuscript), Archivo de La Encarnación, Ávila, fols 5–6.

[30] De Jesús, *Life*, 1: 56; "Por esto me parece a mí me hizo harto daño no estar en monasterio encerrado; porque la libertad que las que eran buenas podían tener con bondad (porque no debían más, que no se prometía clausura), para mí, que soy ruin, hubiérame cierto llevado al infierno, si con tantos remedios y medios el Señor con muy particulares mercedes suyas no me hubiera sacado de este peligro" (De Jesús, *Vida*, p. 53).

[31] Beatriz Blasco Esquivias, "Utilidad y belleza en la arquitectura carmelitana: las iglesias de San José y La Encarnación," *Anales de historia del arte* 14 (2004): 143–56, at p. 50; my translation.

designed by De Jesús according to the principles she had stipulated in her 1581 Salamanca *Constitutions*:

> There shall be no decorations in the house, but only in the church, and nothing in it shall be finely carved—everything is to be made of rough wood. The house shall be small and the rooms low; it must answer all need but contain nothing superfluous. Let it be as strong as possible, surrounded by a high fence, with a field in which hermitages can be made so the sisters may withdraw for prayer, in accordance with the practice of our holy Fathers.[32]

This design, however, was heavily editorialized even during De Jesús's lifetime, beginning with the size of the cells, which (as per De Jesús's instructions) should have been 12 square steps, an original measure criticized by Pedro de Alcántara, who argued for more space for the nuns.[33] In part, as Blasco Esquivias rightfully notes, these uncertainties in the project of reform responded to the fact that De Jesús did not intend to create a new style, although she clearly advocated a certain typology of building which encouraged the survival of all things past and present.[34]

Unfortunately, that typology—as well as the layers in her texts and convents used to represent it—have been covered materially, ideologically, and verbally by editors who did not understand the resistance to categorization that was an intrinsic part of De Jesús's original design.

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[32] De Jesús, *Constitutions*, 3: 228; "La casa jamás se labre, si no fuere la yglesia, ni haya cosa curiosa, sino tosca la madera; y sea la casa pequeña y las piezas bajas; casa que cumpla la necesidad y no superflua; fuerte lo más que pudieren, y la cerca alta y campo para hacer ermitas para que se puedan apartar a oración, conforme lo que hacían nuestros Padres santos" (De Jesús, *Constituciones*, p. 830).

[33] Cited in Blasco Esquivias, "Utilidad y belleza," p. 150. Balbina Martínez Caviró reviews the different steps that De Jesús went through to found a convent in Toledo, and the variety of buildings that housed the convent temporarily until the nuns, after the death of De Jesús, finally arrived at the Convento de San José (Balbina Martínez Caviró, *Conventos de Toledo: Toledo, Castillo Interior* [Madrid, 1990]). The move to a fourth convent was due, as Martínez Caviró notes, to the fact that the Convent of El Torno de las Carretas, where the nuns had lived since 1570, was too small (Martínez Caviró, *Conventos*, p. 347).

[34] Blasco Esquivias rightfully notes that the blueprint offered by De Jesús did not give details about dimension or form for the layout of the convent houses: "Truth to be told, Saint Teresa did neither give any concrete parameters regarding the form of her convents, nor had an expressed intention to create a style distinctive and easy to assimilate by her Order […] [even] if her recommendations were crystal clear when it came to the mode and the atmosphere that she wanted to achieve to propitiate spiritual calm and peace on the premises of her reformed order" (Blasco Esquivias, "Utilidad y belleza," p. 45; my translation).

The first significant "editor" in this context is architect Francisco de Mora, a student of Juan de Herrera—the main figure in the building of El Escorial—who initiated the trace of the 17th-century Convent of San José with a desire to build a "caxa riquissima": a fit, large, rich, proper box for the body of De Jesús. He transcribed the text of the *Foundations* in 1607, operating miraculous healings with the book and a relic he had once obtained from her corpse. After raising funds to build the new space, he secured the permit to begin its construction in 1608 on the site where he wanted to erect his own chapel. He died in 1610 without seeing the chapel; but the church of San José was demolished "up to the old foundations" and the ground broken for the new ones, as he says in his testimony for the canonization process (titled the *Dicho*).[35]

This kind of appropriation set the tone for a number of canonizations of De Jesús's figure that pervert the representation of survival by imposing a style and a categorization on the subject of De Jesús and her writings. The traces of this perversion are exemplarily represented in numerous exhibitions, among which the tiny museum lodged in the reformed Carmelite Convent of Alba de Tormes stands out. In two small rooms, it houses a number of papers and memorabilia relating to the historical figure of Santa Teresa. In this cave-like space, viewers can bear witness to two stunningly elaborate silver reliquaries containing her mummified V-shaped arm and heart, beautifully positioned within walled-in glass cabinets adjacent to the cell that holds the incorrupt body of La Santa. The permanent exhibit, however, says nothing of the meaningful relationship of these body parts to the elaborate scheme of architectural imagery that De Jesús intently designed in

[35] Luis Cervera Vera edited the *Dicho* and published a facsimile in *El arquitecto Francisco de Mora y Santa Teresa de Jesús* (Madrid, 1990). Blasco Esquivias calls for a redefinition of the role played by Mora in the development of the aesthetics of Carmelite convent design. There were precursors to the model façade that canonized Mora. Adjustments in his design—bringing an "atypical disorder" to his building—have a strange beauty of their own, which no doubt springs from the substratum of primitive rusticity and poverty advocated by De Jesús. This substratum must be read more clearly in his design, but Blasco Esquivias too succumbs to cliché definitions of building beauty, à la Renaissance, and in the end grants Mora credit for stamping "on the modest edifice of Avila an artistic quality, an elegance and harmony unseen in the architectural panorama of the Spanish Carmel" (Blasco Esquivias, "Utilidad y belleza," p. 51; my translation).

her texts.[36] Through centuries of misreadings—some more poetic than others—the conventual and mystical spaces created by De Jesús have been translated into Santa Teresa, who has become a lucrative collection of *objets d'art* and "bodies that matter"[37] in religion, literature, art, history, philosophy, spirituality, psychoanalysis, feminism, tourism, and other areas of knowledge, economics, politics, and affect. The end result is a figure largely alienated from Teresa de Jesús and the houses, palaces, and castles of her place of mysticism.[38]

In several episodes of the *Life*, De Jesús herself prefigures the fate of the house-convents of her mystical treatises and conventual reform. The story begins with a broken body, which has been identified in a literal reading with that of Teresa Sánchez de Cepeda, her sinful, adolescent, post-1492 Jewish persona. The narrative thread flows subtly into a repulsive physique, resulting from an inexpressible disease that forced her to travel from town to town in search of a cure—a poetic enterprise evoking exilic meditations on the *atlâl*, or ruins of

[36] As I have argued elsewhere, De Jesús designed her architectural spaces in correspondence with the symbolic proportions ascribed to the male and female body in treatises of architecture from Vitruvius to Alberti, in order to secure her position as authorial figure; see Carrión, *Arquitectura y cuerpo*, pp. 69–123. Blasco Esquivias ("Utilidad y belleza") also explores these relations, agreeing with my premise that they dialogue with Vitruvius and Alberti in matters of building meaning.

[37] See Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York, 1993).

[38] A major exhibition on art and piety in Castilian convents held at the Museo de Santa Cruz in Toledo (26 April–30 July 2006) further illustrates this point. Neither the objects in the exhibition nor the articles of the catalogue explore the architectural imagery composed by De Jesús, although Santa Teresa appeared assiduously in various iconic forms throughout the exhibition and is likewise showcased in many pages of the beautiful catalogue. Two articles mention her beyond the occasional reproduction of a portrait of "La Santa": one on "The desire of God and the love of the arts" (Olegario González de Cardedal, "El deseo de Dios y el amor de las artes: arte y espiritualidad monástica en la España de Cervantes," in *Celosías: arte y piedad en los conventos de Castilla-La Mancha durante el siglo de* El Quijote [Toledo, 2006], pp. 29–51); and another on convent reading lists (Francisco Crosas, "*Tolle, lege*: lecturas conventuales en el Siglo de Oro," in *Celosías*, pp. 65–73). A third study devoted to typologies and spaces in convent architecture seeks to "find out as much as possible how convent spaces were configured and coordinated by paying attention to the uses of cult, communal life, and the specific goals of each religious order" (Alfonso Rodríguez G. de Ceballos, "La arquitectura conventual: tipologías y espacios," in *Celosías*, pp. 75–85, at p. 75; my translation). Unfortunately, Rodríguez de Ceballos makes no reference to the spatial imagery designed by De Jesús, although it offers great insight into the work that remains to be done about "the spiritual climate and environment in which feminine convents were created and the spaces to which these were destined" (*Celosías*, p. 81; my translation).

the beloved campsite, the place that signaled absence and desolation in the *nasîb* or first movements of pre-Islamic *qasidas* and a critical sign of Sufi mysticism.[39] As her *Life* progressed, the increasing struggle further damaged her body in such a way "that everyone who saw me was alarmed."[40] This lasted for the first year at the Convent of La Encarnación in Ávila. At the end of two months, "the severity of the remedies had almost ended my life [...] sometimes I felt as if sharp teeth had hold of me, and so severe was the pain they caused that it was feared I was going mad."[41] The worsening condition of her body eventually leads the character of the confession to her deathbed in the fifth chapter of the *Life*. Her eyelids bear the wax customarily applied to cadavers, and an open grave in her convent signals the rites for the dead performed in her honor at a distant Carmelite monastery. The monstrous, short-lived representation of this body can be interpreted (as it has been) as an untroubled confession: flesh equates sin, and hence it must be repressed. In textual terms, this means that the writing subject has to get rid of the diseased, broken body; but once more, taking this confession at face value can misfire. The central 20 chapters of the *Life* do not represent the agonizing death of the previously-staged broken body; instead, they move with adept agility to a spiritual self-account which lays out the concurrent events of struggles and visions alongside a life of prayer. In this prayer life, the body heals by virtue of devoting itself to irrigation and garden-building, fashioned after the representation of gardens in *mudéjar* architecture. In these central segments of the *Life*, after rejecting the Augustinian premise as insufficient for her reform of the Carmelite Order, De Jesús insisted on demanding austere spaces, scant ornamentation, and meaningful gardens for the Discalced nuns.

Uncannily, as if she were foreseeing the constricting niches in which her figure would be placed after the process of beatification of her

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[39] Michael Sells has explored the relation of poetry with ruins, ghosts, and expressions of love in courtly, Bacchic, and popular settings in Arabic traditions. See the chapter "Love" in *Literature in Al-Andalus*, ed. María Rosa Menocal, Raymond Scheindlin, and Michael Sells (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 126–58.

[40] De Jesús, *Life*, 1: 79; "Comenzáronme a crecer los desmayos, y diome un mal de corazón tan grandísimo que ponía espanto a quien le veía, y otros muchos males juntos" (De Jesús, *Vida*, p. 42).

[41] De Jesús, *Life*, 1: 87; "A los dos meses, a poder de medicinas, me tenía casi acabada la vida, y el rigor del mal de corazón de que me fui a curar, era mucho más recio, que algunas veces me parecía con dientes agudos me asían de él, tanto que se temió era rabia" (De Jesús, *Vida*, p. 47).

figura and her convents, her body reappears as the central subject of an oneiric sequence resonant with heavy architectural detail:

> The entrance, I thought, resembled a very long, narrow passage, like a furnace, very low, dark and closely confined; the ground seemed to be full of water which looked like filthy, evil-smelling mud, and in it were many wicked-looking reptiles. At the end there was a hollow place scooped out of a wall, like a cupboard, and it was here that I found myself in close confinement.[42]

As she brews the design for her first reformed convent, this descendant of *conversos* dares to find—and publicly write—herself within the frame of a threatening staged nightmare. This space of containment, which brings her to virtual stasis, foreshadows the numerous curious places in which her figure would be exhibited:

> Being in such an unwholesome place, so unable to hope for any consolation, I found it impossible either to sit down or to lie down, nor was there any room, even though they put me in this kind of hole made in the wall. Those walls, which were terrifying to see, closed in on themselves and suffocated everything. There was no light, but all was enveloped in the blackest darkness. I don't understand how this could be, that everything painful to see was visible.[43]

As a *mudéjar* sign, the narrative voice climbs out of this hole and finds a way to survive by its versatility and assimilation to this aesthetics of poetic ruins: "The Lord didn't want me to see any more of hell at that time."[44]

The narrative voice of the *Life*, at this point, dismisses the "large and pleasant" space of La Encarnación, which required that the nuns go out "because of great necessity" and obey orders from superiors "who couldn't say 'no' " to people foreign to the convent who liked to request

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[42] De Jesús, *Life*, 1: 214; "Parecíame la entrada a manera de un callejón muy largo y estrecho, a manera de horno muy bajo y escuro y angosto; el suelo me pareció de un agua como lodo muy sucio y de pestilencial olor, y muchas sabandijas malas en él; a el cabo estava una concavidad metida en una pared, a manera de alacena, adonde me ví meter en mucho estrecho" (De Jesús, *Vida*, p. 173).

[43] De Jesús, *Life*, 1: 214; "Estando en tan pestilencial lugar, tan sin poder esperar consuelo, no hay sentarse ni echarse, ni hay lugar, aunque me pusieron en este como agujero hecho en la pared; porque estas paredes, que son espantosas a la vista, aprietan ellas mesmas, y todo ahoga. No hay luz, sino todo tinieblas escurísimas. Yo no entiendo cómo puede ser esto, que, con no haver luz, lo que a la vista ha de dar pena todo se ve" (De Jesús, *Vida*, p. 173).

[44] De Jesús, *Life*, 1: 214; "No quiso el Señor entonces viese más de todo el infierno" (De Jesús, *Vida*, p. 173).

their company.[45] This company, most notably in reference to the time she spent at the palace of Doña María Luisa de la Cerda in Toledo, reminded De Jesús of the desire she had to found a reformed convent, and the plans they drew up together "to provide the new house with income."[46] Through the process of designing the new convent, income became a secondary concern. Instead, the number of nuns came to be a primordial preoccupation, so much so that a number was fixed: "for many reasons we were never desirous that it would have more than thirteen nuns."[47] The need for more enclosure and the drive to crystallize such premises into an actual reformed convent led to calls for her to give up, or to be moved to a prison cell and (as a result) to months of silence. At the end of that period of meditation, the foundation finally took off, with all the difficulties that translate into suffering: "In procuring the money, acquiring the house, signing the contract for it, and fixing it up, I went through so many trials of so many kinds […] that now I'm amazed I was able to suffer them."[48]

The book opens the door to further artistic exploration by telling the story of how that infernal spot designed by others became, by virtue of her own design, a process of adaptation and survival for warring factions and credos: the oneiric furnace becomes the spiritual, psychological, and spiritual torments which are resolved by virtue of her capacity to figure out how to negotiate the foundation of the first reformed convent. Economic need drives the questions, but the desire to build overcomes all of them; and ultimately she finds a way out of the Inquisitorial rack:

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[45] De Jesús, *Life*, 1: 216; "Y aunque en la casa adonde estava havía muchas siervas de Dios y era harto servido en ella, *a causa de tener una gran necesidad* salían las monjas muchas veces a partes adonde con todas honestidad y relisión podíamos estar; […] y también otros inconvenientes, que me parecía a mí tenía mucho regalo, por ser la casa *grande y deleitosa*. Mas este inconveniente de salir, aunque yo era la que mucho lo usava, era grande para mí ya, porque algunas personas a quien los perlados *no podían decir no*, gustavan estuviese yo en su compañía, y importunados mandávanmelo" (De Jesús, *Vida*, p. 175; my emphasis to mark passages translated above).

[46] De Jesús, *Life*, 1: 216; "Ella comenzó a dar trazas para darle renta" (De Jesús, *Vida*, p. 175).

[47] De Jesús, *Life*, 1: 217; "Trataron de la renta que havía de tener, y nunca queríamos fuesen más de trece, por muchas causas" (De Jesús, *Vida*, p. 176).

[48] De Jesús, *Life*, 1: 224; "En tener los dineros, en procurarlos, en concertarlo y hacerlo labrar, pasé tantos travajos y algunos bien a solas (aunque mi compañera hacía lo que podía, mas podía poco, y tan poco que era casi nonada más de hacerse en su nombre y con su favor, y todo el más travajo era mío) de tantas maneras, que ahora me espanto cómo lo pude sufrir" (De Jesús, *Vida*, p. 181).

> The house struck me as very small; so small that it didn't seem to be adequate for a monastery, and I wanted to buy another house next to it, which was also small, to serve as the church. I had no means or way of buying this nor did I know what to do. And one day after Communion, the Lord said to me: "I've already told you to enter as best you can." And by way of exclamation He added: "Oh covetousness of the human race, that you think you will be lacking even ground! How many times did I sleep in the open because I had no place else!" I was astonished and saw that He was right. I went to the little house and drew up plans and found that although small it was perfect for a monastery, and I didn't bother about buying more property. But I arranged to have it fixed up so that it could be lived in—with everything left rough and unpolished—and likewise so that it would not be harmful to health. And this is the way these things should be done always.[49]

This "way" to do things architecturally—which in her mystical treatises would morph into a way of perfection, an interior castle, and a collection of foundations—persisted and survived the opposition of bishops to poor convents, the desire of workmen to convert houses into monasteries in a timely manner, and her own defiance of obedience and fortune in wanting to move to such a poor house with such poor health.[50] Further negotiations and bureaucratic steps placated her furious superiors (the prioress of La Encarnación and the people of Ávila, among others) and steered them toward the "new" space: "Little by little they abandoned the lawsuit and said that now they knew the house was a work of God since in spite of so much opposition His Majesty desired the foundation to go forward."[51] But the *Life*, like the fixer-upper of San José, would end up in the hands of 'bad architects' who have erased the representation of survival by means of architectural versatility and assimilation. Like many *mudéjar* buildings, the

[49] De Jesús, *Life*, 1: 225; "Hacíaseme la casa muy chica, porque lo era tanto, que no parece llevava camino de ser monesterio, y quería comprar otra (ni havía con qué, ni havía manera de comprarse, ni sabía qué me hacer) que estava junto a ella, también harto pequeña, para hacer la iglesia; y acabando un día de comulgar, díjome el Señor: 'Ya te he dicho que entres como pudieres'; y a manera de esclamación también me dijo: '¡Oh codicia de el género humano, que aún tierra piensas que te ha de faltar!' ¡Cuántas veces dormí y vi que tenía razón, y voy a la casita y tracela y hallé, aunque bien pequeño, monesterio cabal, y no curé de comprar más sitio, sino procuré se labrase en ella de manera que se pueda vivir, todo tosco y sin labrar, no más de como no fuese dañoso a la salud, y ansí se ha de hacer siempre" (De Jesús, *Vida*, p. 182).

[50] De Jesús, *Life*, 1: 244–45; De Jesús, *Vida*, pp. 232–41.

[51] De Jesús, *Life*, 1: 249; "[…] y poco a poco se dejaron del pleito y decían que ya entendían ser obra de Dios, pues con tanta contradicción su Majestad havía querido fuese adelante" (De Jesús, *Vida*, p. 201).

Book of Life testifies to a historical memory that cannot be considered merely "Christian", or "Islamic", or "Jewish", but instead a place where a particular mystical subject thrived in moving between antagonisms and surviving their combative oppositions. The narrative voice, having built this conventual house with building blocks of adaptation and transition, leaves this first place of mysticism on a restorative note:

> We get along without any lack of necessities, and I hope in the Lord things will always be like this. Since the nuns are few in number, if they do what they are obliged to, as His Majesty now gives them the grace to do, I am sure they won't lack anything or have need to be anxious or to importune anyone. The Lord will take care of them as He has up to now.[52]

The *Book of Foundations*, or the Place of Mysticism in Comic Mode

According to Alison Weber, the *Book of Foundations* is the place where De Jesús articulates a "rhetoric of authority" in contrast to the other rhetorical stances she advances in her writing: humility in the *Book of Life*, irony in *The Way of Perfection*, and obfuscation in the *Interior Castle*.[53] In this last stage of her "rhetoric of femininity", De Jesús (Weber argues) articulated the ultimate challenge to authority "to return her order to a much more authoritarian monastic rule", laying out a string of tales pertaining to the foundation of Carmelite reformed convents with the voice of a questionable historian: "it is understandable that she should disavow her role as the architect of the reform with the self-deprecating diminutive […] But Teresa also resorts to her old tactic of embracing her opponents' criticism with comic effect."[54] And she had good reason to deploy self-fashioning tactics of deprecation and humor, for she interrogated the frame of Counter-Reformation Catholic orthodoxy by inscribing what Luce

[52] De Jesús, *Life*, 1: 249–50; "[…] y pasamos sin que nos falte lo necesario, y espero en el Señor que será ansí siempre; que, como son pocas, si hacen lo que deven—como Su Majestad ahora les da gracia para hacerlo—, sigura estoy que nos las faltará ni havrán menester ser cansosas ni importunar a nadie, que el Señor se terná cuidado como hasta aquí" (De Jesús, *Vida*, p. 201).

[53] Alison Weber, *Teresa of Avila and the Rhetoric of Femininity* (Princeton, 1990), pp. 123–57.

[54] Weber, *Teresa of Avila*, pp. 123–27.

López-Baralt has termed "traces of Islam" in her works of reform.[55] If the account of the Convent of San José de Ávila was the alpha architectural sign in an alphabet of 17 foundations, the last book written by De Jesús is a collective omega in a mystical line of wisdom and architectural authority that makes up in great comic architectural currency for the agony and ecstasy of the houses represented in the *Book of Life*.

To understand the place of mysticism that De Jesús designs in this, her last book—a radically different narrative and performative event from the family house and the first foundation of San José narrated in her first book—, readers must be aware that the theory and practice of architecture (as William Richard Latheby argued over a century ago) harbors symbolic kernels which may grant mythical proportions to a design and align the idea, planning, construction, and / or history of such buildings with mystical dimensions.[56] This is what happens, for instance, with the lamp trees, sky houses, labyrinths, elevated thrones with staircases, walled cities, golden gates, halls of distinction, domes, trees marking the center of rivers, pavements, and windows to heaven that characterize Ebba in Carthage, Ravenna, Versailles, Knossos in Crete, the Taj Mahal, Saint Paul's Cathedral in Rome, and many others. These are the kind of buildings that transcend time and spatial limitations. De Jesús plays with these symbolic kernels in the collection of tales about the 17 foundations of Carmelite convents over which she presided, to underscore further the capacity of her architectural sign of the house to move through spaces of war, contradiction, and antagonisms. In the *Book of Foundations* the place of mysticism is composed of stone, nails, straw, damask and taffeta, icons of Christ, crosses, skulls and a host of other raw materials with which she puts together walls, doors, windows (or lack thereof), ceilings and roofs with leaks, churches, *desvanes* (attics), and other rooms that morph in her narrative according to the language, function, and space necessary for each foundation. These are the places where poverty, devotion, cold, humidity, and the spirit mingle in an array of spatial designs which—in their most poetic rendition—turn into a garden, a desert with flowers in bloom, ruins hiding fearful ghosts and unspoken sins,

[55] Luce López-Baralt, *Huellas del Islam en la literatura española: de Juan Ruiz a Juan Goytisolo* (Madrid, 1985).

[56] William Richard Latheby, *Architecture, Mysticism, and Myth* (Whitefish, Montana, 2003).

a house with no building, or a well containing an apparition. Comedy explodes with the bang of fireworks under an arch wrapped in taffeta (a sign which will come to signify the death of the wife in honor dramas); with a group of students in Salamanca taking the nuns by surprise in an attic; or with the surreal exodus from the Convent of Pastrana (a gesture of defiance toward the Princess of Eboli), where the tips of the mattresses the nuns carry out of town on their backs make the scene feel virtually like a slapstick routine—or perhaps a rendition *avant la lettre* of the legendary ants scenes filmed by Luis Buñuel in *Un chien andalou*.

The *Book of Foundations*, in sum, remembers the different foundations of the Carmelite reform with as many different architectural signs. They all share in common the same quality of survival and movement through transconfessional territory that the foundation of San José represented in the *Book of Life*, but the variety and plasticity of these new images yield a new dimension of comedy to the narrative. Some—as in the episodes narrating the foundations of Toledo (1569), Salamanca (1570), Alba de Tormes (1571) and Villanueva de la Jara (1580)—retrace the past of a common, simple house negotiated and bought or rented for the respective foundation, conveying to readers (as Steven Spielberg did in his film *Poltergeist*) the consequences of colonizing or violating a space without being aware of its past sacred iterations. The effect this has on the narrated houses is that they acquire a certain aura of monumentalization, a process that forebodes the appropriation of such places of mysticism by academic and political authorities. The gesture of survival in the face of this colonization is tangible in the detail with which De Jesús inscribes elements of *mudéjar* architecture, such as the redefinition of a building for Christian purposes; the recasting of vacant space with a new function and architectural language; and the renewal of a place that lives with a fresh life breathed into it by the mystical text. The foundation of Medina del Campo (1567), which opens the collection of tales of the *Book of Foundations*, reveals this place:

> Having reached the house, we entered the courtyard. The walls seemed to me in a very tumbledown condition and by day they appeared worse still. The Lord must have been pleased that the blessed Father should have become blind or he would have seen that it was not fitting to put the Most Holy Sacrament in such a place. When I looked at the porch I saw that we should have to remove some of the earth from it; there were holes in the roof; and the walls were not plastered. The night was nearly

> over and we had only a few hangings—I believe altogether there were three. These, in view of the length of the porch, were of no use at all. I did not know what to do, for I saw that it would not be seemly to put an altar there. But it was the Lord's will that it should be done at once, for by His providence the lady's steward had a great deal of tapestry belonging to her and also a blue damask bedspread, and she had said that we were to be given whatever we wanted, for she was very good to us.
>
> When I saw how well we were provided for, I praised the Lord, and the others all did the same [...] But my joy was of short duration. For, when Mass had been offered, I went to look at the courtyard through a window and saw that its walls had partly fallen down, so that many days would be necessary before they could be repaired.[57]

In her mystical theories and practices, of which the above quotations are vivid examples, the Carmelite Reformer defended the virtues of small, austere spaces in order for herself and her readers to experience the mystical processes of meditation and contemplation. Her affiliation with (and canonization by) the Catholic Church has translated into a framing of her works that overidentifies these images with architectural theories and practices which contradict or negate the mystical, polysemic meanings of her conventual and literary building. By using two points of definition in *mudéjar* architecture—survival by means of versatility and adaptation, and the capacity to move between contradictory terms and warring credos—the Carmelite nun conferred new meanings upon her literary and conventual texts, in which she built places of mystical experience. Alas, if readers could begin to see the *huellas* of *mudéjar* architecture in De Jesús's place of mysticism, perhaps her spirit—the one who wanders restlessly through her texts—might for once sense the smell of *home, sweet home*.

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[57] De Jesús, *Foundations*, 3: 11–12; "Llegadas a la casa entramos en un patio. Las paredes harto caídas me parecieron, mas no tanto como cuando fue de día se pareció. Parece que el Señor havía querido se cegase aquel bendito padre para ver que no convenía poner allí el Santísimo Sacramento. Visto el portal, havía bien que quitar tierra de él, a teja vana, las paredes sin embarrar, la noche era corta y no traíamos sino unos repusteros—creo eran tres—para toda la largura que tenía el portal era nada. Yo no sabía qué hacer, porque vi no convenía poner allí altar. Plugo al Señor, que quería luego se hiciese, que el mayordomo de aquella señora tenía muchos tapices de ella en casa y una cama de damasco azul, y havía dicho nos diesen lo que quisiésemos, que era muy buena.

Yo, cuando vi tan buen aparejo, alabé al Señor, y ansí harían las demás [...]; mas poco me duró. Porque como se acabó la misa, llegué por un poquito de una ventana a mirar el patio y vi todas las paredes por algunas partes en el suelo, que para remediarlo era menester muchos días" (De Jesús, *Fundaciones*, p. 683).

INTERRUPTED MYSTICISM IN CERVANTES'S *PERSILES*

Christina H. Lee

> Here is a mystery of our race…the propensity of Spanish people is all for action, common sense, and a tendency for preferring the art of life…
>
> —Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo (1879)[1]

Introduction

Miguel de Cervantes made sure that his views on religious issues remained veiled and expressed so ambiguously that literary historians and critics will probably never know what his personal religious beliefs were. What we do know, however, is that this most celebrated of Spanish writers was keenly aware of the central role played by religion in the lives of Spaniards of all backgrounds. In all his works of fiction, he shows an anthropological interest in depicting how his contemporaries lived in a world ruled to a large extent by religious myths and rituals. Mysticism is a subject that Cervantes tackles in a similar manner.[2] He is not interested in fictionalizing or dramatizing a mystical and / or visionary

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[1] I would like to thank Ron Surtz for an enlightening conversation on Spanish mystics and fallen women. Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo's original Spanish says "[en el siglo XVI] tuvimos tantos y tan excelentes autores e inventores de fortificación, de artillería, de arte de navegar, de cosmografía y de arquitectura naval, y relativamente tan pocos geómetras y astrónomos; tantos y tan gloriosos médicos, y relativamente tan pocos cultivadores de la Física experimental y de la Química. Hay aquí un misterio de raza, que conviene dilucidar apartándose de las vulgaridades admitidas, por lo mismo que lleva consigo cierto germen de imperfección que importa combatir y desarraigar. La gente española propende a la acción, y se distingue por el sentido práctico y por la tendencia a las artes de la vida" (Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, *La ciencia española: polémicas, indicaciones y proyectos* [Madrid, 1879], p. 97). I first came upon this reference through E. Allison Peers's book on Spanish mysticism (*Spanish Mysticism: A Preliminary Survey*, London [1924], p. 41).

[2] Most records of mystical experiences come from the lives of nuns, monks, or other people associated with religious orders. Inquisitorial documents of the 16th century also record cases of common folks who attested to having received visions and miracles (a few recognized as authentic by authorities), but they did not pass on to form part of hagiographical or exemplary collections (see William Christian Jr., *Apparitions in Late Medieval and Renaissance Spain* [Princeton, 1981]).

event according to the literary paradigms set up by hagiographical literature. In this essay, I discuss how Cervantes refashions mysticism within the context of his secular and material world.

It is in an intercalated story—often referred to as "the episode of Feliciana de la Voz"—within his last and posthumous novel *The Trials of Persiles and Sigismunda* (and nowhere else in his fiction) where he envisages the only event approaching the paradigm of a mystical and / or visionary experience. Cervantes questions the value of the mystical experience by first leading readers to believe that they will witness a supernatural event—during which his protagonist Feliciana and the Virgin Mary will form a divine union—and then abruptly defying the readers' expectations by interrupting the mystical moment right before its climax. In broad terms, Cervantes casts Feliciana's episode as a perspectivistic exploration of mysticism itself. More specifically, he legitimizes the yearning for supernatural divine intervention by highlighting the protagonist's mother-quest while clearly making the point that the resolutions to her earthly problems are to be found exclusively in the realm of the empirical world.

The Sacred Space of Guadalupe in the *Persiles*

It is significant that the only near-mystical or visionary moment in Cervantes's literary works is textually placed at the center of the *Persiles*.[3] It takes place soon after the eponymous protagonists leave the fruitless lands of the North and enter the fertile countries of Southern Europe. In the novel, the mysterious North is characterized as dark, fruitless, life-threatening, and barbaric, while the identifiable South (Portugal, Spain, France, and Italy) is fertile, redemptive, and what Cervantes's contemporaries would have considered "civilized". Following Mircea Eliade's understanding of religious spaces, the Northern lands represent the space of the profane, while the South symbolizes the sacred. As the pilgrims transition into the early modern Western world, the chaotically amorphous space of dungeons and caverns gives way to the cosmicized territory of Christian temples and shrines.[4]

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[3] Alban K. Forcione, *Cervantes' Christian Romance: A Study of* Persiles y Sigismunda (Princeton, 1972) p. 88.

[4] See Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane* (San Diego, 1987), pp. 20–67.

It is equally suggestive that Feliciana's episode takes place in Guadalupe, a central location in the geography of the Iberian Peninsula, but most importantly, in Spanish religious symbology. Cervantes was aware that his contemporary readers expected the monastery of Guadalupe, with its distinguished image, to occupy a central point in his narrative, for it was celebrated all throughout Spain as one of the most miraculous sites. In the context of Spain's religious landscape, Guadalupe was a central site for hierophanies, a location where the Virgin repeatedly revealed herself through visions and physical apparitions in order to perform miracles.[5] In effect, the apparition of the famous image of Mary in Guadalupe was a well-known legend both to the elite and to the less educated masses. It seems to have been used as a prototype for countless other visions and apparitions of Mary throughout the peninsula.[6]

By the 16th century, Guadalupe had become one of the most miraculous shrines of Iberia. Spaniards invoked its powerful name from all over the world.[7] The pervasive cult to the image of Guadalupe convinced Pedro de Medina, the early modern historian and cosmographer, that its shrine was without doubt one of the greatest in Spain. In his *Grandezas de España*, he says that "it is clearly one of the chosen works of the world, where God our Lord, through his very Blessed Mother, works so many miracles and great deeds that there are not enough mouths to speak of them."[8] Queen Isabel patronized the image

[5] Francisco de Zurbarán's paintings (housed in the Monastery of Guadalupe) record the best-known apparitions and visions of Our Lady of Guadalupe. One of the most memorable apparitions was recorded by Fray Diego de Écija: "Fue en este monasterio de Guadalupe un religioso de los frailes legos, que se decía Fray Diego de Orgaz; era muy devoto de Nuestra Señora Santa María…Estando una noche en su celda, vinieron tres demonios, uno en figura de león y otro de oso y el tercero en semejanza de una monja muy hermosa…Y tomó un palo que tenía en una celda y anduvo en pos de ellos. La Virgen le quiso dar favor a la hora de su muerte, de le aparecer visiblemente y le consolar" (Joaquín Montes Bardo, *Iconografía de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, Extremadura* [Sevilla, 1978], Plate 13, no page number). See Figure 1.

[6] See Christian, *Apparitions*, pp. 88–90.

[7] During the 15th century, Guadalupe was the richest and most popular shrine in Castile. The Spanish monarchy used it as a palace and as a bank (see Ida Altman, *Emigrants and Society: Extremadura and Spanish America in the Sixteenth Century* [Berkeley, 1989], p. 20).

[8] "Esta santa Casa de Ntra. Sra. de Guadalupe tiene tantas y tan notables grandezas, que se muestra muy claro ser una de las señaladas obras del mundo, donde Dios nuestro Señor, por medio de su benditísima madre hace cada día, tantos milagros y maravillas, que no hay lengua humana, que baste para decirlos" (Pedro de Medina, *Obras de Pedro de Medina* [Madrid, 1944], p. 185; my translation).



1. Francisco de Zurbarán, *Apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe to Fray Diego de Orgaz, c.*1639 (Photo: Joaquín Montes Bardo, by permission)

and is known to have traveled there often when in need of spiritual renewal. Some even attributed her conception of a male-heir child—Prince Juan—to her devotion to the Guadalupan Mary.[9] Christopher Columbus made a famous pilgrimage to Guadalupe carrying a five-pound candle after his first voyage to the New World. He believed that Our Lady of Guadalupe had rescued his ship *La Niña* from a death-defying storm on his return trip.[10]

Guadalupe's reputation, with the crescendoing manner in which Cervantes introduces the shrine and its famous image into the narrative, is certainly meant to lead his readers to expect that Feliciana's story will conclude there with a miracle. Let us recall the passage which describes the pilgrims entering this sacred site. The arrival of the pilgrims to the shrine is clearly marked as an opening into a magical setting, a place where all conflicts come to an end. As related by the narrator, the pilgrims are completely absorbed by the overwhelming power that the particular image of Our Lady exerts upon them:

> No sooner had the devout pilgrims set foot on one of the two narrow passes that lead to the valley formed and surrounded by the high mountains of Guadalupe than with each step they took their hearts were filled with growing astonishment. But it reached its peak when they saw the large and magnificent monastery whose walls enclose the *most holy image* of the Empress of Heaven; the *most holy image*, I repeat, that means freedom for captives, a file for their chains, and relief from their suffering; the *holy image* who provides health for the sick, consolation for the afflicted, a mother for orphans, and relief for the unfortunate.
>
> They entered her church expecting to find on its walls purple cloth from Tyre, damask from Syria, and brocade from Milan hanging for adornment; they found instead crutches left by the lame, wax eyes left by the blind, arms hung there by the maimed, and shrouds cast aside by the dead, things from all these people who, after having been bowed down by misery, are now alive, healthy, free, and happy, thanks to the generous compassion of the Mother of Compassion, who in that little place has her blessed Son take the field armed with her countless mercies.
>
> These decorations commemorating miracles made such an impression on the hearts of the devout pilgrims that they gazed all around the

[9] Linda Hall, *Mary, Mother and Warrior: The Virgin in Spain and the Americas* (Austin, 2004), pp. 38–44.

[10] Columbus promised the monks in Guadalupe that he would name one of the newly "discovered" territories after the shrine and fulfilled the promised on his second voyage when he named a mountainous island in the Caribbean with the title of Santa María de Guadalupe (Hall, *Mary, Mother and Warrior*, p. 51).

> church and imagined that they could see captives come flying through the air with their chains wrapped around them, then go hang them on the *holy* walls, and the sick dragging their crutches, and the dead their shrouds, looking for a place to put them because there is no more room in the *holy* church, so great is the number that already cover the walls.
>
> This was a first, something astonishing and never before seen by Periandro or Auristela, much less by Ricla, Constanza, or Antonio, and they didn't get tired of looking at what they were seeing or of reflecting with surprise on what they imagined.[11]

Nowhere else in the *Persiles*, Cervantes's most orthodox piece of work, does the author describe with such drama and equal richness of details and abstraction a sacred site. Through his abundant use of anaphora, ellipsis, and antithesis, Cervantes sets the stage for a Marian hierophany.[12] The reader is encouraged to be as dazzled and astonished by the otherworldly qualities of the sacred objects as Cervantes's pilgrim eyewitnesses in the text. The "holy" ex-votos on the walls of the church

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[11] All citations come from Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *The Trials of Persiles and Sigismunda: A Northern Story*, translated by Celia Richmond Weller and Clark A. Colahan (Berkeley, 1989). The current citation is from pp. 216–17, emphasis added. The Spanish original says: "Apenas hubieron puesto los pies los devotos peregrinos en una de las dos entradas que guían al valle que forman y cierran las altísimas sierras de Guadalupe, cuando, con cada paso que daban, nacían en sus corazones nuevas ocasiones de admirarse, pero allí llegó la admiración a su punto cuando vieron el grande y suntuoso monasterio, cuyas murallas encierran la santísima imagen de la emperadora de los cielos; la santísima imagen, otra vez, que es libertad de los cautivos, lima de sus hierros y alivio de sus pasiones; la santísima imagen que es salud de las enfermedades, consuelo de los afligidos, madre de los huérfanos y reparo de las desgracias. Entraron en su templo y, donde pensaron hallar por sus paredes, pendientes por adorno, las púrpuras de Tiro, los damascos de Siria, los brocados de Milán, hallaron en lugar suyo muletas que dejaron los cojos, ojos de cera que dejaron los ciegos, brazos que colgaron los mancos, mortajas de que se desnudaron los muertos, todos, después de haber caído en el suelo de las miserias, ya vivos, ya sanos, ya libres y ya contentos, merced a la larga misericordia de la madre de las misericordias, que en aquel pequeño lugar hace campear a su benditísimo hijo con el escuadrón de sus infinitas misericordias.

De tal manera hizo aprehensión estos milagrosos adornos en los corazones de los devotos peregrinos, que volvieron los ojos a todas las partes del templo y les parecía ver venir por el aire volando los cautivos, envueltos en sus cadenas, a colgarlas de las santas murallas y, a los enfermos, arrastrar las muletas y, a los muertos, mortajas, buscando lugar donde ponerlas, porque ya en el sacro templo no cabían: tan grande es la suma que las paredes ocupan.

Esta novedad, no vista hasta entonces de Periandro ni de Auristela ni, menos, de Ricla, de Constanza ni de Antonio, los tenía como asombrados y no se hartaban de mirar lo que veían ni de admirar lo que imaginaban" (Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda* [Madrid, 1997], pp. 471–72).

[12] The English translation loses the alliterative and rhythmic traits (see note 11 for Spanish text).

are a testament to the immeasurable power of Guadalupe's image. She is "the most holy image", the one "who" provides relief, consolation, and maternal love. And the countless signs on the wall that speak of the Virgin appearing to heal her sick or captive devotees are meant to steer the reader to believe that Feliciana's redemption is to materialize there through a visionary or otherwise transcendental experience.

Indeed, since as early as the 1400s, the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, like all other dark-skinned madonnas, has been sought and favored by mothers, mothers-to-be, and children.[13] As Diana de Armas Wilson suggests: "It may be argued that Feliciana involves herself in the pilgrimage to the Black Madonna of Guadalupe as a mother-quest, since Black Madonnas—those hermetic wonder-workers who preside over sex, pregnancy, and childbirth in Catholic countries—are especially venerated as the maternal aspect of Mary."[14] Furthermore, Cervantes might have chosen this particular advocation in the *Persiles* because Guadalupe was especially famous for redeeming those afflicted with a form of physical and / or spiritual captivity. These included prisoners, Christian fugitives escaping from Moorish capture (as Cervantes himself had been), as well as lost travelers. Cervantes's texts make multiple references to her when dealing with the subject of captivity—whether it be a factual or spiritual form—in "The Illustrious Kitchenmaid", "The Deceitful Marriage", and, most notably, in the story of the captive of Algiers (in *Don Quixote*), where he casts Zoraida, a Moor-Christian, in her mould.[15] Moreover, records of the Virgin of Guadalupe's miracles show that she not only appeared to and interceded on behalf of exemplary devotees—such as royals and important clergymen—but also to convicted criminals and infidels.[16] Hence, Guadalupe is an advocation that best fits Feliciana's case; she is a "fallen women", a mother and a fugitive trying to find refuge from her murderous father.

For Cervantes, it was clear that Feliciana's mystical union with her spiritual mother would have to be staged in the most sacred site of the Spanish empire. If in the *Persiles* the Church of Saint Paul in

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[13] The earliest version of the Guadalupan legend is from 1440 (Christian, *Apparitions*, p. 88).

[14] Diana de Armas Wilson, *Allegories of Love: Cervantes'* Persiles and Sigismunda (Princeton, 1991), p. 211.

[15] See Christina Lee, "The Legend of the Christian Arab Madonna in Cervantes' *Don Quijote*," *Revista canadiense de estudios hispánicos* 32 (2007): 105–22.

[16] According to Eliade, a hierophany is an act in which a sacred reality manifests itself (*The Sacred and the Profane*, p. 11).

Rome represents the authority of God the Father, the Monastery of Guadalupe in Extremadura stands for the mercy of Blessed Mary the Mother.[17] While Cervantes evidently asserts the primacy of Rome as the city where God's laws are enacted, he favors the Spanish zone of Extremadura, a fertile land of apparitions and miracles, as the most vital and spiritual site within the Christian world.

Cervantes's Mystic as a "Fallen Woman"

In addition to staging Feliciana's final ascent to the miraculous shrine of Guadalupe, Cervantes leads the reader into believing that the heroine's mystical moment will be nothing short of spectacular by shaping her narrative in an acute V sequence (abject descent-exalted ascent). Given the romance mode in which it is written, the story of Feliciana's woeful fall can only merit a wondrous reaction of reversal from the reader. For this reason, Cervantes passes over the prototype of the mystical saint of the time established by Catherine of Siena and Santa Teresa de Ávila, and instead chooses to fashion his mystic-to-be after the paradigm set up by the conflation of Mary Magdalene and Mary of Egypt.[18] In step with the "fall" stories of these harlot-saints, Feliciana perverts her good family name by choosing carnal love over filial piety, and—upon repentance—by abandoning society and retreating into the natural world as a means to seek to expiate her sin of lust.[19] Like Mary of Egypt, whose life is turned around after she comes across the statue of the Virgin Mary of Jerusalem, Feliciana's descent takes a reversal when she encounters the icon of Our Lady of Guadalupe.[20]

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[17] It should be noted that the symbol of Rome becomes destabilized in the last book, for (as pointed out by Mary Gaylord) the site does not fulfill the reader's expectations for a glorious apotheosis ("Ending and Meaning in Cervantes' *Persiles y Sigismunda*," *Romanic Review* 74.2 [1983]: 152–69).

[18] See Marina Warner's *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (New York, 1976), pp. 224–35.

[19] See "Mary Magdalene" and "Mary of Egypt" in Jacobus de Voragine's *The Golden Legend* (Princeton, 1995).

[20] A medieval version of the legend of Mary of Egypt dramatizes the interaction between the fallen woman and a "well-made" statue of Mary in Jerusalem:

> Vio huna ymagen de santa Maria,
> La ymagen bien figurada,
> En su mesura taiada,
> Maria, quando la vio,

Moreover, Feliciana's moral downfall takes her to a new nadir, one not previously tested by earlier harlot-saints. She not only willingly engages in premarital sex, she later rejects the child she bears as the result of her lustful ways. Feliciana recounts the details of her staggering degradation in her confession to the pilgrims in Extremadura. She has a romantic secret affair with a neighboring "very rich hidalgo" named Rosanio.[21] She consequently becomes pregnant with her lover's child. Her father, unaware of her clandestine engagement, betroths her to another man, Luis Antonio, "more noble than rich".[22] He then hastily decides to formalize the marriage without giving Feliciana prior notice. When Feliciana hears the news that she is to wed Luis Antonio on the very same day, she enters her bedroom and almost instantly gives birth to her child. As soon as the newborn is delivered ("dropped"), her father enters her room, discovers his daughter's betrayal, and—taking out his sword—paces towards the crying newborn. Feliciana does not wait to see the rest.[23] She flees her father,

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Leuantosse en pie, antella se paro;
Los ynogos antella finco,
Tan con uerguenca la cato,
Atan piadosament la reclamo
Y dixo: ¡Ay duenya, dulce madre,
Que enel tu vientre touiste al tu padre!

(*La vida de Santa María Egipcíaca, traducida por un juglar anónimo hacia 1215* [Madrid, 1964], pp. 122–23).

[21] Cervantes Saavedra, *The Trials of Persiles and Sigismunda*, p. 206; "un hidalgo riquísimo" (Cervantes Saavedra, *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*, p. 452).

[22] Cervantes Saavedra, *The Trials of Persiles and Sigismunda*, p. 206; "Junto a la villa que me dio el cielo por patria vivía un hidalgo riquísimo… Vivía asimismo en la misma aldea un caballero con otro hijo suyo, más nobles que ricos… Con este segundo mancebo noble ordenaron mi padre y dos hermanos que tengo de casarme… pero yo, a quien los cielos guardaban para esta desventura en que me veo y para otras en que pienso verme, me di por esposa al rico" (Cervantes Saavedra, *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*, pp. 452–53).

[23] Cervantes Saavedra, *The Trials of Persiles and Sigismunda*, p. 207; "y dando un gran suspiro, arrojé una criatura en el suelo, cuyo nunca visto caso suspendió a mi doncella y a mí me cegó el discurso de manera que, sin saber qué hacer, estuve esperando a que mi padre o mis hermanos entrasen y, en lugar de sacarme a desposar, me sacasen a la sepultura… Alborotóse mi padre y, con una vela en la mano, me miró el rostro y coligió, por mi semblante, mi sobresalto y mi desmayo; volvióle a herir en los oídos el eco del llanto de la criatura y, echando mano a la espada, fue siguiendo adonde la voz le llevaba. El resplandor del cuchillo me dio en la turbada vista y, el miedo, en la mitad del alma; y como sea natural cosa el desear conservar la vida cada uno, del temor de perderla salió en mí el ánimo de remediarla, y, apenas hubo mi padre vuelto las espaldas, cuando yo, así como estaba, bajé por un caracol a unos aposentos bajos de mi casa" (Cervantes Saavedra, *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*, pp. 455–56).

child, and lover (who is waiting for her in a hallway), and does not stop until she finds the shepherd's shelter in Extremadura. Reflecting on these passages, Theresa Sears fittingly remarks: "Now, what does she [Feliciana] do? She does not throw herself on her father's mercy. She does not leap forward to protect the baby from the implicit threat. She does not flee to the garden, with or without the child, to her lover's presumed protection. Instead, she takes the one direction that allows her *to escape from all of them*."[24]

To appreciate the severity of Feliciana's downfall, it is fruitful to point out that her repudiation of maternity would have been considered, to say the least, a grave offense against the basic tenets of Christianity during Cervantes's time. And whether deliberately or not, the author makes a consistent and unambiguous connection between female virtue and mothering.[25] Church leaders since the fourth century had conceived of maternity, in either physical or spiritual form, as women's natural condition (with the suffering involved in childbirth and nursing). Through motherhood, the descendants of Eve could expiate the effects of her sin of concupiscence. Clarissa Atkinson reminds us that "human sexuality, deeply flawed by sin, was redeemed to a degree by parenthood. Eve, and through her all women, might be saved 'through bearing children' (1 Tim. 2:15)... maternity [was] a necessary contribution to the economy of salvation."[26] Early modern mothers were told to follow the pseudo-model of maternity set by the Virgin Mary—the Second Eve.[27] Sermons directed to women echoed the tradition of the Franciscan *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, which stressed Mary's emotional attachment to her child. Mary's maternal love was such that she felt her child's pain in her own body: "when he cries, do you think the mother will not cry? She too wept... the mother wiped His eyes and hers, laid her cheek on His, nursed Him, and com-

[24] Theresa Sears, "Sacrificial Lambs and Domestic Goddesses, or, Did Cervantes Write Chick Lit? (Being a Meditation on Women and Free Will)," *Cervantes* 20.1 (2000): 47–68, at p. 59.

[25] Religious authorities in early modern Spain continued to uphold gender stereotypes linking the qualities of gentleness, compassion, tenderness, emotionality, love, nurturing, and security to the female sex, and those of authority, judgment, command, strictness, and discipline to the male sex (Caroline Walker Bynum, "Jesus as Mother and Abbot as Mother: Some Themes in Twelfth-Century Cistercian Writing," *Harvard Theological Review* 70.3/4 (1977): 257–84).

[26] Clarissa Atkinson, *The Oldest Vocation: Christian Motherhood in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 1991), p. 77.

[27] Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex*, pp. 54–55.

forted Him in every way she could."[28] When the Virgin nursed, it was because "unable to contain herself, the mother stooped to pick him up, embraced Him tenderly and, guided by the Holy Spirit, placed Him in her lap and began to wash Him with her milk, her breasts filled by heaven."[29] Cervantes's contemporary readers might also have readily noticed that Feliciana does not live up to her saint, Saint Felicitas, celebrated for her martyrdom and maternity.[30]

That Cervantes portrays his mystic-to-be as the antithesis of the exemplary mother becomes most conspicuous if we consider that the writer fashions his other fictional mothers as self-sacrificing, long-suffering, or nurturing. "The Pilgrim Lady" in "The Illustrious Kitchen-maid", for instance, plans—postmortem—the spiritual redemption of her rapist and father of her daughter. Doña Estefanía ("La fuerza de la sangre") takes on the role of Leocadia's spiritual mother and defender upon learning that her son raped the girl and consequently fathered a child. Zoraida's nursemaid (*Don Quijote*) becomes the Moorish girl's adoptive mother and converts Zoraida to Christianity. The *Persiles*'s Guiomar de Sosa's mothering instincts lead her to forgive her son's murderer, Ortel Banedre, and to protect him from being turned in to the authorities. Also in the *Persiles*, Ricla serves as the nurse and spiritual mother of Antonio de Villaseñor. This so-called barbarian plays, first, the role of a nurse who nourishes Antonio back to health before she becomes his wife and mother of his children.[31] In contrast to these mothers, Feliciana demonstrates a disturbing lack of maternal feeling, if not complete disregard—at least until the *denouement*—for her newborn child.[32] She runs away from her father without ever laying eyes on her child, checking for his gender (a boy) or the state of his health. She never considers the danger under which she is leaving her

[28] *Meditations on the Life of Christ: An Illustrated Manuscript of the Fourteenth Century* (Princeton, 1961), p. 44.

[29] *Meditations*, pp. 32–33.

[30] Saint Felicitas suffered eight martyrdoms because "she suffered seven times in her sons and an eighth time in her own body" (Voragine, *Golden Legend,* p. 364).

[31] The way in which Ricla cares for Antonio is evocative of a mother nursing a child. She is described as "sacando del seno una manera de pan…me lo puso en la boca, y en su lengua me habló…en lo que decía me rogaba que comiese" (p. 174).

[32] Sears, "Sacrificial Lambs," p. 59. The motif of instantaneous birth appears in Cervantes's "La señora Cornelia" (*Novelas ejemplares,* vol. 1 [Madrid, 1980]). In the case of Cornelia, however, the unnatural birth is not representative of the mother's detachment from her child. On the contrary, it evokes the painless birth of the Virgin Mary.

newborn, and even after the danger passes she expresses no concern for his welfare.[33] Her maternal detachment is most obvious in the anti-climactic moment in which she is reunited with her child but is unable to recognize him. Consequently, a goat is said to suckle the infant while, quite disturbingly, the mother is standing within close reach.

The confessional part of Feliciana's episode is indeed saturated with motifs of falling, detachment, and isolation. Her description of giving birth to her child—a process described as "dropping" him from her body—speaks of her desire to disengage herself from the maternal experience. It also echoes her own expulsion from her family home, and by extension, honorable society. Feliciana's descent along the narrative axis is reflected in the description of her flight from home: "I, just as I was, went down a winding staircase to some first-story rooms in my house, and from them I easily got out into the street. From the street I got into the countryside, and from the countryside onto I don't know what road".[34] Readers and listeners of exemplary

[33] Before Periandro, Auristela, and their companions meet Feliciana, an unidentified horseman gives a newborn child to them and requests that they deliver him to Francisco Pizarro and Juan de Orellana in Trujillo. The horseman pays them for the favor with a chain of solid gold. When Periandro informs her that they might have found her infant, she expresses skepticism at the thought of being able to recognize her child. Later, when they bring him to her, she indeed fails to do so. Feliciana "miróla y remiróla [la criatura], quitóle las fajas; pero en ninguna cosa pudo conocer ser la que había parido, ni aun, lo que más es de considerar, el natural cariño no le movía los pensamientos a reconocer el niño" (Cervantes Saavedra, *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*, p. 460).

[34] Cervantes Saavedra, *The Trials of Persiles and Sigismunda*, p. 208; "yo, así como estaba, bajé por un caracol a unos aposentos bajos de mi casa, y de ellos con facilidad me puse en la calle, y de la calle en el campo, y del campo en no sé qué camino" (Cervantes Saavedra, *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*, p. 456). It is indeed Feliciana's failure to accept her maternal role that marks her as an improbable candidate for a legitimate mystical experience by Spanish authorities. In Counter-Reformation Spain, those who experienced mystical trances came under intense scrutiny by the church, which set out to discourage false visions. Most religious thinkers agreed that true visions were extremely rare and that women—the weaker sex—were more prone to false revelations (Julio Caro Baroja, *Las formas complejas de la vida religiosa* [Madrid, 1978], pp. 37–42). To pass the Inquisitorial test of a true mystic, a woman had to provide evidence of an impeccable biography. Women who purported to have had mystical experiences, but had questionable past histories like Feliciana, were generally pronounced impostors or devil-possessed (see Christian, *Apparitions,* pp. 20–21; and Hilaire Kallendorf, *Exorcism and Its Texts* [Toronto, 2003], pp. 203–05). It is not surprising, then, that the majority of church-approved female mystics were nuns or *beatas* who were popularly known to have been spiritually precocious from infancy and had lived in a convent or in some form of self-enclosure from a prepubescent age (see Ronald Surtz, *Writing Women in Late Medieval and Early Modern Spain: The Mothers of Saint Teresa of Avila* [Philadelphia, 1995], pp. 3–19).

romances know that a heroine who falls so steeply can only be warranted a great ascent in the narrative axis. It is natural, then, for Cervantes's audience to expect that the "fallen woman" will mystically transcend her carnality and be turned into a "mother" when they see the heroine standing at the sanctuary of Guadalupe, the focal point in the sacred landscape of Spain.

Mother-Quest in Guadalupe

Feliciana's desertion of her father's house leads her into a mother-quest to Guadalupe. The heroine's yearning for a maternal figure becomes most evident at the outset of her confession when she remarks that she does not have a mother. Moreover, Feliciana's initial appearance in the mountains of Extremadura in primitive form—in tears, "half-naked", and nearly starved—calls attention to the fact that as a child-like creature herself, Feliciana cannot take on the active role of mother until her own quest for a maternal symbol is fulfilled.[35] The recurring parallels drawn between the deprived state of Feliciana and that of her child make the point: they are both in dire need of food and shelter and in danger of having their existence taken away by the same men who are supposed to protect them.

The mystic-to-be's desire to be united to her spiritual mother is likewise suggested in the poem she sings to the Virgin.[36] In fact, five out of the eight stanzas allude to her need to inhabit the womb of the spiritual mother. Feliciana, echoing Old Testament symbology, compares Mary's womb to a "regal structure", "built on deep humility" and a "blessed structure" with "abundant justice and strength".[37] The motif of the womb is better visualized in the image of Feliciana's

[35] Cervantes Saavedra, *The Trials of Persiles and Sigismunda*, p. 218; "Venía medio desnuda" (Cervantes Saavedra, *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*, p. 449).

[36] As William Christian conjectures, the way in which people relate to a saint "reveals their deepest preoccupations" (Christian, *Apparitions,* p. 4).

[37] Cervantes Saavedra, *The Trials of Persiles and Sigismunda*, pp. 220–24; "[Los altos y fortísimos cimientos] la fábrica regia levantaron", "sobre humildad profunda ser fundaron", "fábrica bendita", "de su mucha justicia y fortaleza" (Cervantes Saavedra, *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*, pp. 477–78). The tradition of likening the closed womb of the Virgin Mary to an enclosed edifice (castle, temple, or fortress) comes from medieval sermons and the iconography of the *Tota Pulchra* (see Manuel Trens, *Iconografía de la Virgen en el arte español* [Madrid, 1947], pp. 153–54; and David Grant Cowling, *Building the Text: Architecture as Metaphor in Late Medieval and Renaissance Spain* [Princeton, 1988], p. 58).

self-enclosure inside a "sturdy live oak" that is later described as being "pregnant".[38] The reference to the impregnated oak tree also alludes to the statue of Guadalupe which (according to legend) was carved out of an oak tree. It additionally recalls the popular images of the rod of Jesse, where Mary and Jesus spring out, and of Mary as the tree and the holy root (*radix sancta*) that bears the fruit of redemption.[39] Lastly, it evokes the wooden icons of the Opening Madonna (*Vierge ouvrante*) whose bellies can be unsealed to reveal a child inside.[40]

Feliciana's journey to find a surrogate mother has precedents in the well-known hagiography of mystics. Frank Graziano has observed that biographies of notorious female saints and visionaries reveal that they were either bereft of mothers as children or had notably dysfunctional relationships with them. Catherine of Siena disowned her actual parents when they punished her for wanting to take her religious call and replaced them with "her father Jesus Christ, her mother the Blessed Virgin." Saint Teresa of Avila decided to make the Virgin Mary into her otherworldly maternal surrogate when she realized that her mother had died. She remarks: "when I began to understand what I had lost, I went in distress to an image of our Lady, and with many tears beseeched her to be my mother."[41]

Like these mystics, Feliciana seeks to find a mother figure who can fulfill the affective needs that are missing from her life. Cervantes's depiction of Feliciana's brother as an uncontrollably enraged young man parallels the unruly, passionate behavior of his sister and brings to the forefront the fact that both siblings lack patience, prudence, compassion, and charity, all virtues that mothers were expected to pass on naturally to their children. "[F]or to my great misfortune, I

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[38] Cervantes Saavedra, *The Trials of Persiles and Sigismunda*, pp. 204–05; "valiente encina", "preñada [estaba la encina]" (Cervantes Saavedra, *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*, pp. 450–51).

[39] Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex,* p. 47.

[40] This type of icon illustrates the heterodox view (albeit popular among early modern Catholics) that without the Mother of Christ, redemption would not have been possible. The Virgin Mary, in all her maternal advocations, represents—as Victor Turner states—the "completely 'feminine'…She is seen as compassionate, tender, a little capricious perhaps, vulnerable to suffering, infinitely maternal and understanding, and inclined rather to grieve at than to punish the sins of the world" (Victor Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* [New York, 1995], p. 161).

[41] The citations from Saint Catherine and Saint Theresa come from Frank Graziano, *Wounds of Love* (Oxford, 2004), p. 153. He quotes *The Life of St. Catherine of Siena*, trans. George Lamb (New York, 1960), p. 124; and *Saint Teresa de Jesus: The Complete Works*, trans. E. Allison Peers (New York, 1963), 2: 384.

have no mother", states Feliciana, as she describes the impassive and austere atmosphere harbored in her household.[42] More precisely, Feliciana reflects her desire to experience *pietas* and *caritas*, attributes conceived by and large as "motherly" and / or "feminine" and clearly absent from her father's household. This longing is further elaborated in the poem she sings to the Virgin Mary, in which she praises the love and mercy of her spiritual mother: "clothed in charity", "tender, but so strong that… [she] broke Hell's serpent's forehead", the mother that put an end to "the mortal discord of God and man", and "the sinner's firm hope".[43]

Most moralists of the 15th and 16th centuries, such as Fray Luis de León and Luis Vives, supported the view that *pietas* intertwined with *caritas* to form key female attributes. In *The Perfect Wife,* Luis de León explains that this is because women "possess this mercy through their natural softness, and so for a woman to be hard-hearted and aloof with the needy is much more reprehensible than for a man."[44] Cervantes, on the other hand, conveys that these "soft" virtues are to be practiced by both men and women.[45] The key modules in the building of the Christian family—*pietas, caritas*, and rationality (a traditionally male feature, according to him), are not to be dichotomized along gender lines, but rather to be embodied by all.[46] Hence, Cervantes suggests that Feliciana's fall and ensuing mother-quest is the consequence of a

[42] Cervantes Saavedra, *The Trials of Persiles and Sigismunda*, p. 206; "que madre no la tengo, por mayor desgracia mía" (Cervantes Saavedra, *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*, p. 454).

[43] Cervantes Saavedra, *The Trials of Persiles and Sigismunda*, pp. 220–21; "ciñe la caridad", "tierna, pero tan fuerte, que la frente… quebrantásteis de la infernal serpiente", "vos fuisteis el medio… que redujo… de Dios y el hombre la mortal discordia", "del pecador, la firme esperanza" (Cervantes Saavedra, *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*, pp. 479–81).

[44] "dado que el ser piadoso y limosnero es virtud que conviene a todos los que se tienen por hombres, pero con particular razón las mujeres deben esta piedad a la blandura de su natural, entendiendo que ser una mujer de entrañas duras o secas con los necesitados, es en ella vituperable más que en hombre ninguno" (Luis de León, *A Bilingual Edition of Fray Luis de León's* La perfecta casada*: The Role of Married Women in Sixteenth-Century Spain* [Lewiston, 1999], pp. 120–21).

[45] Artistic allegories always depicted these virtues as women. The roots of embodying *pietas* and *caritas* in female figures can be traced to classical art. See Adolf Katzenellenbogen, *Allegories of the Virtues and Vices in Medieval Art* (Toronto and London, 1989); and Erika Rummel, *Erasmus* (New York, 2006), p. 39.

[46] See Alban Forcione, *Cervantes and the Humanist Vision: A Study of Four Exemplary Novels* (Princeton, 1982), p. 159.

dysfunctional patriarchal system which fails to provide the "female / maternal" virtue of selfless and compassionate love.[47]

Feliciana's rejection of the father, brother, and son can be seen along the lines of William Childers's interpretation as the young woman's revolt against a patriarchal order which attempts to control her body and reproductive system.[48] It is important to note, however, that the episode should not be read as an effort to overthrow patriarchies altogether or replace them instead with matrifocal systems.[49] To say that Cervantes rebelled against all male-dominated structures oversimplifies the complexity of his thought. The fact that his fictions concoct as many functional as dysfunctional father-ruled families shows that his interest was not in challenging the entire male-dominated family system, but rather in pinpointing its deficiencies. I believe that Cervantes is rather interested in utilizing the mother-quest theme as a means to encourage readers to explore the deficiencies in a dysfunctional patriarchal system that drives the heroine to a mother-quest.[50] Let us recall that it is because Feliciana's father and brother "seemed more like executioners than a brother and a father" that she is driven to the sierras

[47] Bynum elaborates on the dichotomy of male / female symbols in *Holy Feast and Holy Fast* (Berkeley, 1987), pp. 260–76.

[48] William Childers, *Transnational Cervantes* (Toronto, 2006), pp. 88–90.

[49] For Diana de Armas Wilson, Feliciana recalls the Amazon woman of the New World. Like the Amazon types described by Gaspar de Carvajal in his chronicles, Feliciana rejects patriarchy by rejecting her male child (*Cervantes, the Novel, and the New World* [Oxford, 2000], pp. 127–29).

[50] A careful unraveling of the text manifests the fact that while the missing maternal components in the patriarchal regime steer Feliciana to her moral downfall, her needs are materially satisfied by paternal figures. For instance, the person who carries out the first example of nurturing in the episode is a man, the old shepherd. This moment occurs when an old shepherd takes Feliciana in his arms to prevent her physical collapse from exhaustion and hunger. The old shepherd, then, symbolically suckles Feliciana, thereby restoring her to physical health. As the elder and leader of the community of shepherds, he exhibits both what was ordinarily considered female affectivity and male authority. He thereby evokes images of Jesus and God as "maternal" nurturers, often seen in the Bible, early Christian writers, and in certain texts of the high Middle Ages (see Ronald Surtz, "The Privileging of the Feminine in the Trinity Sermon of Mother Juana de la Cruz," in *Women's Voices and the Politics of Spanish Empire*, ed. Jeanne L. Gillespie, Jennifer Eich, and Lucia Guzzi Harrison [New Orleans, 2008], pp. 98–99; and Ritamary Bradley, "Patristic Background of the Motherhood Similitude in Julian of Norwich," *Christian Scholar's Review* 8 [1978]: 101–13). Cervantes, hence, suggests that "feminine" virtues and qualities are not to be restricted by gender.

of Extremadura in a degenerate state.[51] To find protection from them, she asks: "put me underground; I mean, hide me so anyone hunting for me can't find me".[52] By referring to her ideal hiding place as a place "underground", within the earth, Feliciana figuratively articulates her yearning for the protective womb of the *Magna Mater*.[53]

The various multi-leveled allusions to Feliciana's search for a symbolic womb make it apparent that Guadalupe represents for her the end of a mother-quest. Through the motif of the mother-quest, Cervantes emphasizes the humanist notion that a person cannot be fully formed unless he / she is nurtured by a figure who, in imitation of the Mother of God, embodies the virtues of *pietas* and *caritas*. He makes the point that pure patriarchies in which the "maternal" voice is undermined or excluded are destined to fail. Indeed, Feliciana loses her voice upon leaving her home. It is subsequently restored when she finally comes upon the figure of the Virgin Mary.

Staging the Mystical Experience

As shown above, Cervantes sets the stage for Feliciana's mystical climax structurally by shaping the narrative according to what appears to be a descent-ascent paradigm and thematically by plotting Feliciana's story as a mother-quest. But what most plainly alerts readers that the heroine is going to be engaged in a mystical experience are her physical appearance and stance at the shrine. This culminating point in the episode is described thus:

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[51] Cervantes Saavedra, *The Trials of Persiles and Sigismunda*, p. 218; "los que parecían más verdugos que hermano y padre" (Cervantes Saavedra, *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*, p. 474).

[52] Cervantes Saavedra, *The Trials of Persiles and Sigismunda*, p. 204; "Lo primero, señores, que habéis de hacer es ponerme debajo de la tierra; quiero decir, que me encubráis de modo que no me halle quien me buscare" (Cervantes Saavedra, *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*, p. 450).

[53] The motif of Mary as *Magna Mater* was first recorded in Iberia by Alfonso el Sabio, who titled one of the laws of the *Setenario*: "About how those who worshipped the earth, really meant to worship Saint Mary, if they understood it well" ("De cómmo los que aorauan la tierra, a Santa María querían aorar ssi bien lo entendiesen") (Alfonso el Sabio, *Setenario*, ed. Kenneth H. Vanderford [Buenos Aires, 1945], p. 73).

> …the beautiful Feliciana of the Voice, having kneeled down and folded her hands over her chest, weeping tender tears with a peaceful face and without moving her lips or making any other sign or movement that would indicate she was a living creature, released her voice to the wind, lifted her heart to Heaven, and began to sing some verses she knew by heart and later wrote down; she dazzled the senses of everyone listening.[54]

Feliciana's stance in Guadalupe, prostrated before the Virgin, with her head turned upwards, and giving the impression that she is separated somewhat from her earthly surroundings in a trance-like state, calls to mind the archetype of the female visionary saint or mystic depicted by visual artists of Cervantes's time.[55]

Art historian Victor Stoichita has pointed out that during the Counter Reformation, visual artists became increasingly preoccupied with finding ways to represent the mystical experience. To be more precise, they wanted to capture through an image the transcendental moment in which a mystic encountered the divine. But these artists were also aware that the mystical experience, by its very nature, was unrepresentable, "since *a priori*, what they represent can neither be seen…nor depicted."[56] All a painter or a sculptor could do was to convey the ecstatic intimate experience of the mystic through his or her external gestures and physical posture. By the first decades of the 17th century, visual artists had established a kind of method for depicting mysticism; they had developed what could be called a "mystic style".[57] For Vicente Carducho, the signs that codified a mystical body were: "kneeling, clasped hands thrown up to Heaven or level with the chest, head raised, eyes gazing upwards, bathed in tears or gay, or else head bowed down and eyes closed […] and other actions depending on the

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[54] Cervantes Saavedra, *The Trials of Persiles and Sigismunda*, p. 217; "[P]ero lo que más es de ponderar fue que, puesta de hinojos, y las manos puestas y junto al pecho, la hermosa Feliciana de la Voz, lloviendo tiernas lágrimas, con sosegado semblante, sin mover los labios ni hacer otra demostración ni movimiento que diese señal de ser viva criatura, soltó la voz a los vientos y levantó el corazón al cielo, y cantó unos versos que ella sabía de memoria (los cuales dio después por escrito), con que suspendió los sentidos de cuantos la escuchaban" (Cervantes Saavedra, *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*, p. 473).

[55] Visionaries or mystics were believed to have imaginary, corporeal, or intellectual visions.

[56] Victor Stoichita, *Visionary Experience in the Golden Age of Spanish Art* (London, 1995), p. 7.

[57] Stoichita, *Visionary Experience*, p. 80.

emotions of the devout person, who might be praying, submissive, sad, happy, in awe…"[58]

Considering the characteristics of the "mystic style" developed by visual artists at the time, one can see readily that Cervantes's mystic-to-be is drawn along the same lines.[59] Although José de Ribera and Luis Murillo's representations of Mary Magdalene come to mind, it is Gian Lorenzo Bernini's statue of Saint Teresa which best captures the subject of the mystic-in-action (see detail of statue in Figure 2). In effect, Michael Call's description of Saint Teresa in ecstasy with "eyes closed, body inclined backward, legs and arms hanging lifelessly…more dead than ecstatic" is reminiscent of Cervantes's Feliciana.[60] Bernini's Saint Teresa, like Cervantes's Feliciana, is depicted in the midst of her rapture as spectators watch her from the sides. With both Cervantes's and Bernini's works, the intradiegetic audiences gaze at the subjects in ecstasy and compel us—standing outside the framed narratives—to be aware of the performative aspects of mysticism. But Cervantes is not in any way interested in representing an account of a traditional mystical union. Rather, he manipulates the audience to imagine an upcoming mystical spectacle. His aspiring mystic, the penitent Feliciana, is only just made ready for her visionary event when he abruptly interrupts the action to relocate the scene to the secular world of early modern Spain.

The Appearance of the Father and the Return to the Secular World

Cervantes sets up a scene in which we expect to witness nothing short of a vision or an apparition of Mary. But what comes next is most anti-climactic. Instead of the vision of the divine mother, we witness the appearance of Feliciana's earthly father. In the midst of her rapturous singing, Feliciana's father and one of her brothers enter the temple. Upon recognizing her exceptional voice, the brother rushes to kill her on the spot, interrupting the scene of spiritual absorption and

[58] Quoted and translated by Stoichita, *Visionary Experience*, pp. 174–75.

[59] For a discussion of how tears relate to devotional images, see Susan Verdi Webster, *Art and Ritual in Golden-Age Spain: Sevillian Confraternities and the Processional Sculpture of Holy Week* (Princeton, 1998), pp. 177–79.

[60] Michael Call, "Boxing Teresa: The Counter-Reformation and Bernini's Cornaro Chapel," *Woman's Art Journal* 18.1 (1997): 34–39.



2. Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Saint Theresa in Ecstasy*, Santa Maria della Vittoria, Cornaro Chapel, *c*.1647–51 (Rome) (Photo: Alinari/Art Resource, New York)

"sealing" Feliciana's lips.[61] The father stops the brother on the grounds that the execution should not be carried out on this sacred site and suggests that they slaughter her outside the church instead. Intent on vengeance, they drag Feliciana out onto the streets, in the midst of her cries for help. Thus, the heroine's spiritual ascent curves downward and gives way to a descent into the secular world.

Along with the interrupted mystical scene and the unexpected appearance (or "apparition") of Feliciana's father, there comes a narrative switch to the secular world which dominates Cervantes's novelistic form. Outside the sacred site, Feliciana once again finds herself in Eliade's "profane" space and at the mercy of her father's authority. Now the legendary tone and motifs give way to a narrative which reveals itself to be anchored in historical reality. The mythical elements that governed the tale up to this point have faded and—as the *peripeteia* gets underway—readers are brought back to a world they recognize as their own. The realm of the *Magna Mater* in the previous part has been forcefully overtaken by "civilized" society. The new laws governing the narrative become apparent when the historical personages of Pizarro and Orellana on their riding horses make an unexpected entrance:

> In the midst of all the confusion—the father shouting for his daughter, the brother for his sister, while the authorities were defending her until they could find out what was going on—about six men on horseback came into the square from one side. Two of them were immediately recognized by everyone as Don Francisco Pizarro and Don Juan de Orellana; coming over into the uproar of the crowd along with another horseman whose face was covered by a black taffeta mask.[62]

They are accompanied by the mysterious masked man—the same one that had deposited an unidentified newborn with the pilgrims

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[61] Cervantes Saavedra, *The Trials of Persiles and Sigismunda*, p. 218; "Estas razones y alboroto selló la boca de Feliciana" (Cervantes Saavedra, *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*, p. 474).

[62] Cervantes Saavedra, *The Trials of Persiles and Sigismunda*, p. 218; "Estando en esta confusión, el padre dando voces por su hija y, su hermano, por su hermana y la justicia defendiéndola hasta saber el caso, por una parte de la plaza entraron hasta seis de a caballo, que los dos de ellos fueron luego conocidos de todos, por ser el uno don Francisco Pizarro y el otro don Juan de Orellana. Los cuales, llegándose al tumulto de la gente (y, con ellos, otro caballero que con un velo de tafetán negro traía cubierto el rostro)" (Cervantes Saavedra, *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*, p. 474).

earlier—who now uncovers his face and identifies himself as Rosanio, Feliciana's promised husband. Rosanio declares:

> Feliciana is my wife and I am Rosanio, as you can see, and not of such a low station in life that I deserve to have dictated to me by others what my own experience has led me to choose. I'm a nobleman and can introduce you to witnesses to that nobility. I have enough wealth to maintain my position, so it's not right that what was gained by good luck should be taken away from me by Luis Antonio just to make you happy.[63]

It becomes evident from Rosanio's self-presentation that if Feliciana's father spares her life, it will be due to the fact that her lover is wealthy. Let us recall that the latter was rejected in the first place because he was richer than Luis Antonio, but not nobler. At this point, however, wealth takes precedence over inherited nobility. Pizarro and Orellana, descendents of Peruvian *conquistadores*, serve as the spokespersons for a self-made class of men who value pragmatism and money above all. They question Feliciana's father and brother: "What's happened to that good mind of yours, my lord Pedro Tenorio… What's wrong with Rosanio to make him unworthy of Feliciana?… My lord Sancho, anger never promises a happy ending for its impulses… Your sister has known how to choose a good husband".[64] What Pizarro and Orellana postulate here is that for Feliciana's father and brother, it is not only unreasonable but also detrimental to their survival to miss the opportunity to have a liaison with such wealth. The purpose for the juxtaposition of historical to fictional characters is two-fold. In terms of narrative form, it marks the switch from a romance to a novelistic mode; in terms of content, it shifts the focus from spiritual to material concerns.[65] Feliciana's advocate is no longer the Virgin Mary of miraculous legends, but characters who epitomize the paternal and

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[63] Cervantes Saavedra, *The Trials of Persiles and Sigismunda*, p. 218; "Feliciana es mi esposa, y yo soy Rosanio, como veis, no de tan poca calidad que no merezca que me deis por concierto lo que yo supe escoger por industria. Noble soy, de cuya nobleza os podré presentar por testigos; riquezas tengo que la sustentan y no será bien que, lo que he ganado por ventura, me lo quite Luis Antonio por vuestro gusto" (Cervantes Saavedra, *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*, p. 475).

[64] Cervantes Saavedra, *The Trials of Persiles and Sigismunda*, p. 219; "¿Dónde está vuestra discreción, señor don Pedro Tenorio? […] ¿Qué tiene Rosanio que no merezca a Feliciana? […] Señor don Sancho, nunca la cólera prometió buen fin de sus ímpetus […] Vuestra hermana supo escoger buen marido […]" (Cervantes Saavedra, *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*, p. 476).

[65] Cervantes's "novelization" of the romance form characterizes many of his short *novellas*, such as "La gitanilla", "La ilustre fregona", and "La española inglesa."

secular voice of authority, which Cervantes connects directly to material wealth.

As we have shown, at the moment when Feliciana's mystical ecstasy is interrupted, she becomes "novelized" as a character. She is reinserted into the discourse of patriarchal authority. The empirical laws governing her world coincide with the same laws that govern Cervantes's contemporary readers. And, while Cervantes recognizes the devastating effects that the absence of the female or maternal voice has on patriarchies, he points out that this voice can only be reinstated through male or paternal authority. Furthermore, by curtailing the heroine's mystical climax, Cervantes imparts the notion that affective experiences fall short of having tangible consequences in the increasingly material world of early modern Spain.

Conclusion: Poetry as a Mystical Experience

Feliciana's interrupted mystical experience suggests that Cervantes was skeptical of transcendental raptures and visions as authentic experiences. For the writer, the otherworldly cannot solve problems which arise in a secular context. The Virgin of Guadalupe never "appears" to Feliciana. She plays no active role in the resolution of her ordeal. But Cervantes does not dismiss the spiritual altogether; he does not allow the profane to touch the sacred in his fiction. Let us recall that Feliciana's father refuses to take revenge at the shrine of Guadalupe because of his fear that God would seek retribution for such desecration ("this isn't a theatre for violence or a place of punishment […] for in thinking you'll punish someone else's crime you might just bring punishment for your own guilt down upon yourself").[66] Unlike Luis de Góngora's and Francisco de Quevedo's satirical comments on popular religiosity, Cervantes demonstrates a profound respect for the emotional and impressionable aspects of Spanish spirituality. He is particularly interested in addressing the desire of women to transgress impossible situations by having direct contact with divinity. After all, as argued by Steven Ozment, mysticism is a form of spirituality that

[66] Cervantes Saavedra, *The Trials of Persiles and Sigismunda*, p. 219; "No es éste, ¡oh hijo!, teatro de miserias ni lugar de castigos […] pensando castigar el ajeno delito, te eches sobre ti la pena de la culpa propia" (Cervantes Saavedra, *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*, p. 474).

has historically appealed to those who desire a personal relation with God—or in this case, His mother—independent from the mediation of oppressive regimes. Through mysticism, a "fallen woman" such as Feliciana is, in theory, "above popes and kings, beyond sacraments and laws, immune to worldly praise and condemnation".[67]

Although Cervantes most definitely curtails the physical union between Feliciana and the Virgin Mary in order to replace it with the authority of the father, he does not cancel out the legitimacy of mysticism altogether in his text. At the end of the episode, Cervantes reinstates Feliciana's voice by reproducing the song which the poet-mystic had not been allowed to finish earlier. Thus, as one reads the poem, one may visualize Feliciana's completion of her divine union with the "most Holy Mother".[68] Regardless of the prejudices that Cervantes's reader might hold about mysticism, he / she recognizes it as a valid experience when he / she reads (or "sings") Feliciana's song. In the last instance, Cervantes highlights the notion that both poetry and mysticism attempt to express transcendental human experiences that are essentially ineffable.

[67] Steven Ozment, *Mysticism and Dissent: Religious Ideology and Social Protest in the Sixteenth Century* (New Haven 1973), p. 13. Consider also Ron Surtz's comment that "[w]hat the visionary draws upon hints at concerns that go beyond the ineffable experience and suggests, instead, rather practical considerations" (Surtz, *Writing Women*, p. 17).

[68] Cervantes Saavedra, *The Trials of Persiles and Sigismunda*, p. 217; "Santísima madre" (Cervantes Saavedra, *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*, p. 472).

SUSPENSIO ANIMI, OR THE INTERWEAVING OF MYSTICISM AND ARTISTIC CREATION

Elena del Río Parra

> The first paradox of the mystic is to place himself in language, point us from language and with language towards an experience that language is unable to host.
>
> —José Ángel Valente, *Essay on Miguel de Molinos*

The average reader is usually able to recognize in specific literary texts a state identifiable with *ataraxia*, defined as "[t]he state of tranquility or imperturbability, freedom from anxiety, considered to be one of the desirable results of an immersion in skepticism, and by Epicureans to be part of the highest forms of happiness".[1] This state becomes palpable in the works of contemporary authors such as Franz Kafka. This kind of attitude—although quite far from its Epicurean roots and to be distinguished from *apathia* (the absence of passion) and *afairesis* ("removal" in rhetoric; "abstraction" in mathematics, non-metaphysical)—becomes increasingly evident in literature from the end of the 19th century. This is a time when consciousness reveals itself as the main character in a strange form of personification, one which unleashes states including existential boredom, indifference, and processes of automatic perception that find an answer in art as a way to combat them. However, the various forms of *ataraxia* are not exclusive to post-Industrial Revolution and Freudian trademarks. Literary expressions occurring after the historical *Avant-garde* have bequeathed us a large variety of works where consciousness unfolds its numerous states, among which can be pointed out its radical and emancipating breach from the individual, its multiple personalities, or its ever-unsettling absence.[2]

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[1] Simon Blackburn, *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* (Oxford, 2005).

[2] Peter Rossbacher has done extensive research on existential boredom, indifference, processes of automatic perception, and the art theories that derive from these: "Šklovskij's Concept of *Ostranenie* and Aristotle's *Admiratio*," *Modern Language Notes* 92.5 (1977): 1038–43.

The present work intends to establish some coordinates for the phenomenon of self-detachment—of one's conscience, judgement, and sense—and its creative manifestations in the mystical literature of the Golden Age, which, among other representations, anticipate the exploitation of the oneiric by the *Avant-garde* movements. Our article will attempt to sketch the main lines through which conscience (either deliberately or involuntarily as spontaneous answer to certain circumstances) is capable of suspending conclusion and remaining in doubt, neither affirming nor denying. This process leads to literary manifestations of a phenomenon which, far from extinguishing itself throughout history, represents a solid bridge between pagan thought and that associated with the so-called "existential aesthetic". The model satisfies an archetype because it emanates from collectivity, innate and unconscious; it is a paradigm able to support a textual system and disregard psyche or, to the contrary, give up language and constitute itself into essence. Such an exercise where the "self" is eradicated results in the beginning of processes of a different nature which are described through a wide semantic field covering its many variations, though often the usage ends up resolving these terms as synonyms. Words such as "abandonment", "transposition", "transportation", "absorption", "outrage", "astonishment", "shock", "suspension", "stupefaction", "rapture", "derangement", "fascination", "disturbance", and even "alienation" refer us to different sensorial stages. Some of these are transitory, others permanent; some provoked, others involuntary; some unleashing creative clarity, and others hindering all action; states that are contemplative beginning, but also transposed resolution. The great variety of nuisances around the spirit contrasts strongly with just one single antonym, "imperturbable", in an eloquent lexical decompensation.

Greek *epoché* (εποχή), born under the Skeptical School's cloak as a way of detaching from insoluble problems, was discarded by Aristotle, who believed it impossible for mankind to refrain from judging the world. Saint Augustine, as John Heil pointed out, agreed with the former in that he found it impossible to suspend judgement altogether:

> The wise skeptic was one who allowed the outer world to penetrate to the smallest degree his inner world of tranquility. 'Wisdom' depended on the suspension of judgement, the skeptic's most effective method of overcoming external disturbances. Quite naturally this notion was attacked by Augustine (…) As anyone who has tried it must have discov-

> ered, the recommended suspension of judgement is extremely difficult to manage (honestly).[3]

In agreement with Saint Augustine, recent scientific studies have suggested that the human mind elaborates involuntary and automatic judgement on situations and people just seconds after perception;[4] but it is no less true that prolonged suspension of judgement also evolved into a deliberate and rigorous technique which authors like Cicero used as a means to advance knowledge. Beyond a futile exercise in skepticism, *epoché* detaches from dogma and anticipates Cartesian methodical doubt as the base of scientific thought.[5] This is an idea upon which John Locke based his conception of an uneducated human being as a *tabula rasa*, a suspended being free from *a priori* conceptions. The absence of judgement constitutes the starting point.

Contrary to deliberate suspension as a method of attaining knowledge proposed by *epoché*, Baruc Spinoza (almost an exact contemporary of Locke) introduced the opposite process in his *Tractatus de intellectus emendatione* (*c.*1661):

> for doubt is nothing but the suspension of the mind about something which we would affirm or deny did not something else interpose, our ignorance of which causes our knowledge of the thing to be imperfect. Hence it is to be concluded that doubt always rises because things are investigated without order.[6]

For Spinoza, therefore, suspension is not a method of knowledge but something that arises from lack thereof, constituting itself in a result, not in a principle. This mechanism had been intuited centuries earlier in confessional literature. Confessors' manuals and compilations of cases of conscience insistently stressed the importance of methodical scrutiny, precisely in order to free the penitent from any doubt: "The

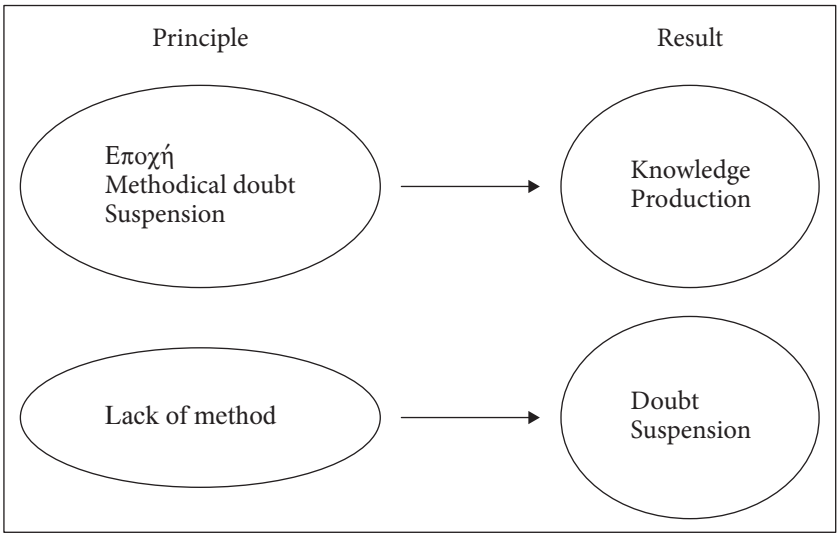
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[3] "Augustine's Attack on Skepticism: The *Contra Academicos*," *The Harvard Theological Review* 65.1 (1972): 103–04.

[4] Knut K. W. Kampe, Chris D. Frith, and Uta Frith, "'Hey John': Signals Conveying Communicative Intention toward the Self Activate Brain Regions Associated with 'Mentalizing', Regardless of Modality," *The Journal of Neuroscience* 23.12 (2003): 5258–63.

[5] Along the same lines, conscience will detach itself from moral principles in the first systematic practices that will lead to what many considered the opposite end of dogma: atheism, sadism, and libertinism.

[6] Benedict de Spinoza, *Tractatus de intellectus emendatione*, trans. Hale White (London, 1899), p. 45.



1. Diagram 1

Astesana urges confessors to 'scrutinize the conscience of the sinner in confession as a physician scrutinizes wounds and a judge a case,' because interrogation can disclose things that penitents hide out of confusion or simplicity".[7] Furthermore, the Catholic Church considers doubt to be beneficial because it guarantees no error and compels a resolution: while suspended judgement and uncertainty must be elucidated according to moral law, perplexity is doubt carried to the limit due to lack of information, not method, and must be avoided as a permanent state.[8]

Suspension, therefore, is placed in opposing places, as summarized in Diagram 1 (see Figure 1). Nevertheless—whether it be a principle or a result, a method of knowledge or a fatal consequence of a lack thereof—*suspensio animi* has led us to the field of science, not artistic creation. In order to determine how it works in liberal arts, we must necessarily retrace the wide and miscellaneous lexical range it encompasses in Spanish Golden Age culture.

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[7] Thomas N. Tentler, "The Summa for Confessors as an Instrument of Social Control," in *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion*, ed. Charles Trinkhaus (Leiden, 1974), p. 115.

[8] Kenneth E. Kirk, *Conscience and Its Problems: An Introduction to Casuistry* (London, 1927), pp. 321ff.

"To suspend judgement" is, according to the 1739 edition of the *Diccionario de la Real Academia* (*DRAE*), "not to attempt to resolve some doubt because of strong, opposing reasons (…) Other than that whoever suspends judgement does not affirm nor deny".[9] Similarly, "to suspend" means

> to lift, hang or stop something up or in the air. It is also to detain or stop for awhile, or to pause. Latin *suspendere*, *continere*, *differre*, *interrumpere*. It also means to snatch the spirit and stop it with the admiration of the strange or the unexpected of some object or happening.[10]

On the other hand, "to be suspended" only applies in the Golden Age to a legal procedure or unresolved requirement (Sebastián de Covarrubias's *Tesoro* coincides in this meaning), while "suspended" is associated with the state of one's spirit, as defined by Covarrubias: "whoever is still and perplexed".[11] As a noun, "suspension" means "halting or stopping. Also, doubt or halting in the spirit's movement. It also means admiration".[12]

In a theological context, "suspension" is "rapture, ecstasy, and mystical union with God", and "ecstasy" remains the closest etymological form to "losing oneself", traveling outside the body due to divine trance or to Dionysiac / Bacchic effects. It is specifically during the Spanish Renaissance when the pagan sense of the term is discarded in favor of the Christian—which, on the other hand, becomes closer (though not identical) to what several Eastern practices call *satori*.[13] It is during the early Renaissance when the medieval states of suspended contemplation extend their range of action and find in mystical poetry their ideal vessel, as part of the spiritual exercise that results in leaving

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[9] "Suspender el juicio": "no determinarse a resolver en alguna duda por las razones que hacen fuerza por una y otra parte (…) Fuera de que quien suspende el juicio no afirma ni niega" (*Diccionario de la Real Academia* [Madrid, 1739], p. 192). Cited hereafter as DRAE, followed by date of publication.

[10] "Suspender": "levantar, colgar o detener alguna cosa en alto o en el aire. Vale también detener o parar por algún tiempo, o hacer pausa. Lat. *suspendere*, *continere*, *differre*, *interrumpere*. Significa también arrebatar el ánimo y detenerlo con la admiración de lo extraño o lo inopinado de algún objeto o suceso" (DRAE 1739, p. 192).

[11] "el que está parado y perplejo" (Sebastián de Covarrubias Orozco, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* (1611) [Madrid, 1979], fol. 180v).

[12] "Detención o parada. Vale también duda o detención en algún movimiento del ánimo. Significa también admiración" (DRAE 1739, pp. 192–93).

[13] It is not by coincidence that scholars such as Luce López-Baralt have devoted several monographs to the complexities of this connection, either towards the Buddhist lineage or the Islamic one.

oneself. It is evident that Saint John's songs and stanzas represent the most immediate use of *suspensio animi*, the loss of identity in favor of a state of ambiguity that allows for reception at a metaphysical level: "In air from the castle wall / as my hand in his hair moved lovingly at play, he let cool fingers fall / -and the fire there where they lay!- / all senses in oblivion drift away";[14] "Head swimming with delight, / all-engrossed and fey- / every sound and sight / as dumbfounded lay. / My soul in a strange ray / knew all and nothing there- / burst the mind's barrier".[15] This technique has been adapted to the stages of free composition which, far from dadaistical spontaneity, are currently taught in many creative writing workshops, and are also recommended as therapy for certain diseases.

In Saint John's case, however, we must also consider the effect of ineffability, that is, the brain's inability to apprehend divine knowledge, an effect José Ángel Valente has described as follows:

> It is the topic which Curtius calls ineffability, that is, the impossibility for language to host a superabundance of content (*nullus sermo sufficiat*) (…) In fact, the topic in question reveals an entire attitude towards the world and language. We could label it, rather than the topic of ineffability, as the topic of the radical "shortness of saying" (…) This principle of maximum tension between unutterable content and signifier, with manifestations of all sorts subject to an endless search, has a declared, reiterated declaration in the work of Saint John of the Cross (…) The mystic needs access to his own experience, and does it though poetic means, and so the word turns into knowledge of what is not to know, not knowledgeable, beyond all knowledge (…) Indeed, the shortness of saying, the sense overcharge of the signifier is what allows, by virtue of the latter, for it to host the unutterable or what can not be said explicitly.[16]

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[14] "El ayre del almena / quando yo sus cavellos esparcía / con su mano serena / en mi cuello hería / y todos mis sentidos suspendía" (Juan de la Cruz, "Canciones de el alma", in *Poesía*, ed. Domingo Ynduráin [Madrid, 1995], p. 7; *The Poems of St. John of the Cross*, trans. John Frederick Nims [Chicago, 1979], p. 21).

[15] "Estava tan embebido / tan absorto y ajenado / que se quedó mi sentido / de todo sentir privado / y el espíritu dotado / de un entender no entendiendo / toda sciencia tracendiendo" (Juan de la Cruz, "Coplas de él mismo, hechas sobre un éxtasis de harta contemplación", in *Poesía*, ed. Ynduráin, p. 3; *The Poems of St. John of the Cross*, trans. Nims, p. 25).

[16] "Se trata del tópico que Curtius llama de la inefabilidad, es decir, de la imposibilidad de alojar en el lenguaje la sobreabundancia de los contenidos (*nullus sermo sufficiat*) (…) En realidad, el tópico en cuestión es revelador de una entera actitud ante el mundo y el lenguaje. Podríamos catalogarlo, más que como tópico de la inefabilidad, como tópico de la radical 'cortedad del decir' (…) Este principio de la tensión

Since the Middle Ages, we find visionaries endlessly scattered in hagiographies; people who, entering in a state of trance, were capable of reaching beyond the physical. Some of them specialized in certain topics (Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque in envisioning the sacred heart of Jesus, while Saint Bridget and Saint Vincent of Beauvais, for instance, saw through Purgatory). Especially interesting are the cases of Isabel de Texeda and María de Santo Domingo, the renowned "beata de Piedrahíta", who claimed to be able to prophesy the future through ecstatic raptures.[17] The confessor / nun tandem, though under constant suspicion and surveillance, proved to be, if anything, an efficient mechanism for religious and political propaganda, but also compelled many autobiographies containing moments of suspension to be put into writing during the 16th century. Cloistered women as well as devotees, due to their education and perfectionistic way of life, represented an ideal vessel for the divinity to reveal doctrines and wishes through a suspended state which could be further enhanced by other means such as solitude, sleep, prayer or music.[18] The later heretical "quietism", literally "still life", and lack of physical action—"speculative life", in Fray Luis de Granada's *Guide for Sinners* terms, and "contemplation" in Miguel de Molinos's nomenclature—were the conditions under which ascetic and mystical literature were to emanate, sometimes in the form of mental images that lack a proper language

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máxima entre contenido indecible y significante, cuyas manifestaciones de todo orden podrían ser objeto de un rastreo sin término, tiene declaración reiterada en la obra de San Juan de la Cruz (…) El místico necesita acceder a su propia experiencia y lo hace por la vía poética, con lo que la palabra se hace conocimiento de lo que consiste en un no conocer, en un no saber, en un más allá de todo conocimiento (…) En efecto, la cortedad del decir, la sobrecarga de sentido del significante es lo que hace, por virtud de éste, que quede en él alojado lo indecible o lo no explícitamente dicho" (José Ángel Valente, "La hermenéutica y la cortedad del decir," *Las palabras de la tribu* [Barcelona, 1994], pp. 61–69).

[17] Jodi Bilinkoff, "A Spanish Prophetess and Her Patrons: The Case of María de Santo Domingo," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 23.1 (1992): 21–34.

[18] "This spirit has been more commonly received in dreams, solitude and prayer, or while listening to musical accent, because in those instances the soul is farther from the bodily passions and better suited to receive divine revelations; that is why the holy offices are celebrated with music, because it lifts to contemplation and furthers from worldliness" ("Este espíritu ha sido más común recebirle en sueños, en soledad y oración, o oyendo sonoro acento, porque en estos tiempos está el alma más apartada de las passiones del cuerpo y más dispuesta para recebir las revelaciones divinas; y por esto se celebran los divinos oficios con música, porque levanta el ánimo a la contemplación y le aparta de las cosas terrenas") (Jerónimo de Huerta, *Traducion de los libros de Caio Plinio Segundo de la historia natural de los animales* [Madrid, 1599], fol. 30v).

to contain them.[19] This quiet life, whose formalization ended up resulting in perpetual imprisonment for Molinos himself and the banning of his works, most often takes place within the walls of a convent or monastery, where immured friars or nuns recreate the classical experience in the desert (*deserere*), abandoning themselves to prayer and creating an ecstatic alter-ego, to be found in many lives of saints. Also, certain emblematic places in Spain hosted hermits who recreated the biblical experience in a rural setting in early Catholicism. Among the most remarkable ones is the "Valley of Silence" in León, where Saint Genadio retired, or San Millán de la Cogolla in La Rioja, where this saint lived in partial solitude after excavating his own "home". Only oral testimonies from these early desert-dwellers have survived in the form of legends and hagiographies, but several religious orders after the Counter Reformation recreated this kind of contemplative life to the extent of turning suspicious, like Saint Theresa's and Saint John's own (very productive and creative) Carmelites.

Whether through utterances (Saint John's renowned and recurrent alliteration "Something—the telltale tongue, a-stumble, said it")[20] or complete grammatical sentences; whether through quietism, darkness or sickness; whether spontaneous or following a pre-established formula; whether with an enclosed or a full meaning; whether in written or oral accounts and testimonies—16th-century mystical and ascetic figures of speech are undoubtedly to blame for a heritage of fruitful

[19] Fernando Iwasaki Cauti, on a contrasting note, calls attention to hagiographies and paintings as a source for creative raptures: "painted Christs and Virgins turned their faces to see Catherine of Siena, Lutgarde of Aywières was embraced by a crucified Christ, and many saints drank from Christ's bleeding side by leaning on a canvas or a sculpture (…) And so, Rosa de Santa María used to rapture in front of a *Breastfeeding Virgin* by Mateo Pérez de Alesio" ("los Cristos y las Vírgenes de los cuadros volvían sus rostros para mirar a Catalina de Siena, Lutgarda de Aywières era abrazada por un Cristo crucificado, y muchas santas bebieron del costado sangrante de Cristo apoyando sus labios sobre un lienzo o sobre una escultura […] Así, Rosa de Santa María solía arrebatarse frente a una *Virgen de la leche* de Mateo Pérez de Alesio") (Fernando Iwasaki Cauti, "Mujeres al borde de la perfección: Rosa de Santa María y las alumbradas de Lima," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 73.4 [1993]: 581–613, at p. 603). Also see n. 27 for staple bibliography on visionaries in the New Spain. Iwasaki's works cited represent only a small part of works on this topic, to which we must add Ángela Muñoz Fernández's *Beatas y santas neocastellanas: ambivalencias de la religión y políticas correctoras del poder (ss. XIV–XVI)* (Madrid, 1994), and Elizabeth A. Lehfeldt's *Religious Women in Golden Age Spain: The Permeable Cloister* (Hampshire, 2005), especially chapter 6.

[20] "Un no sé qué que quedan balbuciendo" (Juan de la Cruz, "Cántico", in *Poesía*, ed. Ynduráin, 7th stanza).

"suspended" expressions. Most of these forms were short-lived, due to the efficiency of the Holy Office, but long outlived the Spanish early Renaissance in other forms, as we shall see.

The Golden Age makes evident use of *suspensio animi*, associating it especially with ascetic and mystical creation, and most importantly with ecstasy and rapture (but in no way limited to these). It also finds room for development on the stage, as Daniel Heiple has pointed out when referring to "suspension" in drama as the suspense through which the playwright is capable of prolonging the ending throughout an entire act in order to maintain the spectator's suspense.[21] Agustín de la Granja, in turn, has further developed the concept in referring to the stage technique of suspension as the actor's total paralysis, and "by resolving through his eyes' expression *all* the action in the lover's passion",[22] the eyes being the eloquent tongues that cannot be tamed by suspension. We must add that suspension in Golden Age drama usually precedes a discharge of great emotional tension, as if it allowed for strength to be gathered in order to react one way or another. These moments of suspension are characterized by the loss of coherence and speech, or at least of grammatical sense, gesture, color, and being. From this loss follow recovery attempts with symptoms ranging from faltering voice, blushing, shivering, slack movements, and difficulty breathing. As a result, a final and liberating discharge of energy follows, as when the contemplation of beauty precedes a passionate feeling; in Pedro Calderón de la Barca's verses: "You will soon see that whoever has been suspended / daringly fights".[23] Either as deliberate practice or befallen action, suspension of judgement allows us to consider reality in such a way that, once consciousness is recovered, it is stronger:

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[21] Daniel Heiple, "La suspensión en la estética de la comedia," in *Estudios sobre el Siglo de Oro en homenaje a Raymond McCurdy*, ed. Ángel González, Tamara Holtzapfel and Alfred Rodríguez (Madrid, 1983), pp. 25–35. Richard-Laurent Barnett has seen it as a pilgrimage full of meanderings, referring to Blaise Pascal's *Pensées*, where the author reflects upon the doubts and paradoxes he is incapable of resolving: "Pascal's Prescripts: The Semiotics of Suspension," *Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur* 108 (1998): 241–57.

[22] "en resolver con el juego de sus ojos *toda* la acción de la pasión amorosa" (emphasis his) (Agustín de la Granja, "Los actores del siglo XVII ante *La vida es sueño*: de la técnica de la turbación a la práctica de la suspensión," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 77 [2000]: 145–71, at p. 149).

[23] "Presto verás que el que ha estado suspenso / lidia atrevido" (Pedro Calderón de la Barca, Act 1 of *En esta vida todo es verdad y todo mentira*, in *Teatro escogido de D. Pedro Calderón de la Barca* [Madrid, 1868], 1: 193).

Saint Theresa of Avila's healing constitutes the perfect vital and literary example:

> That very night my sickness became so acute that for about four days I remained insensible. They administered the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, and every hour, or rather every moment, thought I was dying; they did nothing but repeat the *Credo*, as if I could have understood anything they said. They must have regarded me as dead more than once, for I found afterwards drops of wax on my eyelids (…) For a day and a half the grave was open in my monastery, waiting for my body (…) I saw clearly that both out of this my present trouble, and out of others of greater importance, relating to my honour and the loss of my soul, this my father and lord delivered me, and rendered me greater services than I knew how to ask for. I cannot call to mind that I have ever asked him at any time for anything which he has not granted; and I am filled with amazement when I consider the great favours which God hath given me through this blessed Saint; the dangers from which he hath delivered me, both of body and soul.[24]

Much research has been done on states such as melancholia, madness, lethargy, and ecstasy by both psychology and psychiatric medicine. But these conditions, which play such an inextricable part in roles and characters, are not proprietary of their literary environments: Calisto's, Leriano's, and Vidriera's illnesses match the innumerable stupefied, bewitched, enchanted, fascinated, ruptured imbeciles—simple, absent-minded, and disturbed—that have populated Spanish culture, history, and literature since the dawn of the Middle Ages. The mentally disturbed, for instance, together with idiots and imbeciles, belong to a lexical field not associated with creativity, at least in the Golden Age. "Disturbed", from the Latin *turbatus, perturbatus, confusus*, is one who is surprised, confused or shocked in some act, causing him to blush, so

[24] Saint Theresa of Jesus, *The Life of St. Theresa of Jesus, of the Order of Our Lady of Carmel, Written by Herself*, trans. David Lewis [Westminster, Maryland, 1948], pp. 31–37; "Dióme aquella noche un parajismo que me duró estar sin ningún sentido cuatro días poco menos. En esto me dieron el sacramento de la Unción, y cada hora y momento pensaba espiraba, y no hacía sino decirme el Credo, como si alguna cosa entendiera. Teníanme a veces por tan muerta, que hasta la cera me hallé después en los ojos (…) Tiniendo día y medio abierta la sepoltura en mi monesterio, esperando el cuerpo allá (…) Vi claro que ansí desta necesidad como de otras mayores de honra y pérdida de alma de este padre y señor mío me sacó con más bien que yo le sabía pedir. No me acuerdo hasta ora haberle suplicado cosa que la haya dejado de hacer. Es cosa que espanta las grandes mercedes que me ha hecho Dios por medio de este bienaventurado santo, de los peligros que me ha librado, ansí de cuerpo como de alma" (Teresa de Jesús, *Libro de la vida*, ed. Dámaso Chicharro [Madrid, 1994], pp. 146–52).

that he is incapable of talking or carrying on with what he was doing.[25] Covarrubias's *Tesoro* defines "turbarse" as "to be taken by a certain king of fear (…) that in a way takes away the sense, disturbs reason, and alters memory".[26] Opposed to this transitory state are the more permanent ones of the idiot, the foolish, and the imbecile: the idiot is "the ignorant, one who is illiterate, vulgar, common people";[27] the foolish (Spanish "tonto", from *attonitus*, thoughtless or out of oneself) is "ignorant, stupid, lacking understanding or reason";[28] lastly, "imbecile" only refers to physical weaknesses (thin, languid, and sick).

These three conditions—imbecility, idiocy, and stupidity—are always described as permanent, but the vagueness in their definitions easily makes them equivalent to suspension. Hence, "out of oneself" applies to both the fool and the mystic, so that it will be the use of the word which establishes the differences or lack thereof.[29] This is a theory refuted by Baroque literary theorist Luis Alfonso de Carvallo with logical arguments:

> as you declare (the source being Tulio) that *insanire* means to be foolish. Poets are not; much to the contrary, they are exemplarily discreet, and hence they are not fools. Tulio also says in his *Third Tusculan* that they called madness and *amentia* the affects of the spirit, and they lacked the light of understanding. For the affects of the Poet's understanding, when transported in that manner, are lighter and more lucid, as they are not blinded with physical things. Therefore, the Poet's transport will not be insanity nor madness, but he says (…) that the lack of knowledge is insanity and madness. The Poet will not be unknowledgeable, thus not unhealthily mad. And if madness is against ingeniousness and incompatible with understanding, and the Poet's is such and so subtle (…) How can the Poet be insane?[30]

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[25] *DRAE* 1739, p. 377.

[26] "tomar un cierto género de espanto (…) que quita en cierta manera el sentido, perturba la razón y altera la memoria" (Covarrubias, fol. 198r).

[27] "ignorante, el que no tiene letras, vulgo, plebeyo" (DRAE 1734, p. 204).

[28] "ignorante, mentecato, falto de entendimiento o razón" (Covarrubias, fol. 189v).

[29] The equivalency among the mystic, the madman, and the fool is a common token throughout the history of Eastern and Western civilization. For one representative study of this vast tradition, see Walter Kaiser, *Praisers of Folly* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963).

[30] "como tú dices (tomándolo de Tulio) que *insanire* quiere decir ser necio. Los Poetas no lo son, antes son espejo de la discreción, luego no son locos. Dice más Tulio en la *Tusculana tercera*, que llamaron amencia y locura a los afectos del ánimo, que carecían de la luz del entendimiento. Pues el Poeta cuando está ansí transportado, los afectos de su entendimiento tienen más luz y claridad, por no estar ofuscados con las cosas corporales. Luego no será insania ni locura la transportación del Poeta, mas dice (…) que la insipiencia es insania y locura. El Poeta no ha de ser insipiente

By the same token, the many variations by which suspension is defined are often used as synonyms, even when technically they are not. That is the case of "stupefied", from the Latin terms *spasmo corruptus*, *stupefactus* and *stupidus*, which is occasionally used as an equivalent to "absorbed" and "disturbed";[31] "to stupefy" is then defined as: "[t]o remain suspended, admiring or alienated by something notable".[32] The medical term would be "alienation" (Spanish, "pasmarota"), a disease often faked by the poor seeking commiseration, from the Latin *fictus stupor*. And "stupefaction"—which is literally "the suspension or loss of the senses and the movement of the spirits, with contraction or impairment of the limbs"[33]—is a figurative equivalent to our modern definition of a *socialite*, according to Antonio de Guevara's *Aviso de privados*: "The one who with others and for others spends all his time, and does not keep for his soul even a moment, suffers of stupefaction and is hindered by dullness".[34] Typical symptoms of stupefaction include the afore-mentioned suspension of reason and discourse, and also stiffness, spasmodic nerve contraction, and even immobility.[35]

Although "to come out of oneself" is associated with the stages of mystical ecstasy and is therefore the result of a desired process, "to be out of oneself" has destructive connotations, usually linked to narcotic substances such as alcohol, opium, cannabis or henbane (Spanish, "beleño"). The latter unleashed heavy dreams and nightmares, and corresponds to the adjectives "embeleñado" or "embelesado". The corresponding noun (Spanish, "embeleso") is, however, deprived of any association with henbane, while the very origins of the verb ("embelesar") point to the deceiving capabilities of language:

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luego ni loco insano. Y si locura es contra el ingenio, y con el entendimiento incompatible, y el de los Poetas es tanto y tan subtil (…) ¿Cómo puede ser loco el Poeta?" (Luis Alfonso de Carvallo, *Cisne de Apolo* [1602], ed. Alberto Porqueras Mayo [Kassel, 1997], p. 359).

[31] "Pasmado el discurso / absorto el ingenio, / y el juicio turbado, / aun a hablar no acierto" (Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *Auto sacramental de El sacro Parnaso*, in *Autos sacramentales, alegóricos, e historiales*, ed. Pedro de Pando y Mier [Madrid, 1718], 5: 374).

[32] "Quedar suspenso, admirado o enajenado de alguna cosa notable" (*DRAE* 1737, p. 144).

[33] "suspensión o pérdida de los sentidos y del movimiento de los espíritus, con contracción o impedimento de los miembros" (*DRAE* 1737, p. 145).

[34] "Pasmo padece, y de modorra está tocado el que con otros, y por otros, ocupa todo el tiempo, y no toma para su ánima siquiera un momento" (Antonio de Guevara, *Aviso de privados y doctrina de cortesanos* [Madrid, 1573], Prologue).

[35] Covarrubias, fol. 135r.

> to suspend, snatch, and make the imagination and spirit stop by showing an object or persuading with the art of words. The origin of this verb seems to be rooted in the Arabic *embellek*, which means to fool, because those suspended are, in a way, fooled and lacking movement.[36]

Bordering the aforementioned states we find "absorbed", which is equated with being suspended, snatched, or flabbergasted with admiration;[37] to the same semantic field of *admiratio* belongs "to rapture" (Spanish, "absortar"): "to suspend and snatch the spirit, leaving one flabbergasted and admiring due to the greatness of some object or happening. Latin, *In admirationem rapere*".[38] Admiration, as the absorption of feeling, is probably one of the most sought-after effects by Baroque artists, who expect from the spectator a degree of suspension equal to what Stendhal experienced the first time he walked the streets of Florence.[39] However, in contrast to his unexpected seizure, the Golden Age audience honors his name by wishing to be taken out of itself through the artist's many devices, be they entering a church, going to the theater, or trying to solve a concept or a visual poem. As E. C. Riley has stated: "admiration is one of the fundamental principles of Baroque art",[40] and the spectator, already transformed into a consumer, expects and demands to be suspended.

The association of admiration with verisimilitude, ridicule, and positive or negative reactions to a text has already been discussed.[41] In

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[36] "suspender, arrebatar y hacer parar la imaginación y ánimo de uno mediante algún objeto que se le pone a la vista, o se le persuade con el artificio de las palabras. El origen de este verbo parece viene del arábigo *embellek*, que significa entontecer, pues a los que embelesan en cierto modo los entontecen y dejan sin movimiento" (*DRAE* 1732, p. 387).

[37] *DRAE* 1726, p. 26.

[38] "suspender y arrebatar el ánimo, dejándole [*sic*] pasmado y admirado por lo inopinado y grande de algún objeto o suceso. Lat. *In admirationem rapere*" (*DRAE* 1726, p. 26).

[39] "J'étais déjà dans une sorte d'extase, par l'idée d'être à Florence, et le voisinage des grands hommes dont je venais de voir les tombeaux. Absorbé dans la contemplation de la beauté sublime, je la voyais de près, je la touchais pour ainsi dire. J'étais arrivé à ce point d'émotion où se rencontrent les *sensations célestes* données par les beaux-arts et les sentiments passionnés. En sortant de Santa Croce, j'avais un battement de coeur, ce qu'on appelle des nerfs à Berlin; la vie était épuisée chez moi, je marchais avec la crainte de tomber" (Stendhal [Marie-Henry Beyle], *Rome, Naples et Florence* [1817] [Paris, 1865], p. 207).

[40] "La admiración era uno de los principios fundamentales del arte barroco" (E. C. Riley, "Aspectos del concepto de *admiratio* en la teoría literaria del Siglo de Oro," *Studia Philologica: Homenaje a Dámaso Alonso* 3 [1963]: 173–83, at p. 173).

[41] Eduardo Urbina, "El concepto de *admiratio* y lo grotesco en el Quijote," *Cervantes: Bulletin of the Cervantes Society of America* 9.1 (1989): 17–33, at pp. 20ff.

order to establish this matter further, we must resort once again to the *Academia* dictionary in order to verify that the Latin origin of "admiration" is none other than *suspensio animi*, at least until 1832, when *admiratio* will be redefined as "admiration", and *suspensio animi* as "doubt or detention in some movement of the spirit".[42] In its original meaning, admiration corresponds to a state prior to any positive or negative reaction, when the spirit remains suspended and indecision has not yet given way to judgement. It is a stage previous to the *thaumaston* (θαυμαστόν) described in Aristotle's *Poetics*, which we identify today with wonder or catharsis (not to be taken as synonyms). The expression of suspension that, as we have seen, corresponds to the shrinking of the shoulders, the stupefied face or the lost sight, is accompanied by the admiring gesture and the "ah!" sound in which the person remains lost while in suspension, trying to make sense of what is presented to him.

Baroque poetry (like theater and architecture) clearly follows the path of mysticism and masters this resource, which consists of suspending the mind and the senses. It happens, for instance, when the reader, going through a sonnet, has to wait—if he is lucky—for the first quartet to find the main verb. It also takes place when one tries to decipher Gongorine metaphors, attempting—as in a crossword or *sudoku*—to find the right terms in order to establish accurate connections and reach a feasible meaning.[43] Luis de Góngora presents himself

[42] "duda o detención en algún movimiento del ánimo" (*DRAE* 1832, p. 705). The Aristotelian notion of *admiratio*, tied to feelings such as terror, surprise, or piety, can be traced a long way though the Italian Renaissance and its poetic and rhetorical arts. In a parallel direction, the meaning of "suspension" leans towards the lack of affection; hence it is paradoxical that both concepts are conjoined in one definition. Marvin T. Herrick gives us a clue as to how the equivalency between *suspensio animi* and *admiratio* appeared in the *DRAE* (as well as to the identification of *suspensio* and *admiratio* in Covarrubias's *Tesoro*): in Piccolomini's readings and re-readings—via Madius, via Robortelli—of Aristotle and Cicero floats the idea of admiration as motor to achieve deep knowledge, that is, as a previous stage, free from judgement: "men are moved to the study of wisdom by wonder" (Marvin T. Herrick, "Some Neglected Sources of *Admiratio*," *Modern Language Notes* 62.4 [1947]: 222–26, at p. 224).

[43] We must not forget how Góngora defended his text, arguing that the reader obtained the most pleasure from solving his poetic metaphors: "That you will find in my *Soledades*, that is, if you are capable of cracking the wall and uncovering the mystery they hide" ("Eso mismo hallará Vm. en mis *Soledades*, si tiene capacidad para quitar la corteza y descubrir lo misterioso que encubren") (Luis de Góngora, *Carta en respuesta de la que le escribieron*, in *Obras completas*, ed. Juan and Isabel Millé y Giménez [Madrid, 1972], p. 896). However, *catachresis* (also practiced profusely by Góngora) is, for David Goldblatt, the rhetorical device that best identifies with suspen-

in the ballad "When I was a youngster" in the process of trying to describe a figure: "the beauty of the eyebrows, / so thin and subtle, / had me suspended for a while / in case they were a porcupine's".[44] Near the genre of senselessness and some paintings by Giuseppe Arcimboldo or Hieronymus Bosch, visual poetry and so-called "uncomfortable" or difficult poetry present their best disconcerting manners to suspend the reader through their picto-grammatical games and various tricks because, aside from being taut or scared, the spectator demands to be put under suspension. Neither is it coincidental that this period witnesses the triumph of the *silva*—an anastrophic stanza that allows one to get lost in the reading—nor the abundance of poems accompanied by detailed instructions or that can be read in different directions like labyrinths or hieroglyphics. It will only be a matter of time for the ellipsis to impose itself as a typographical expression.

If the very act of reading is in itself a form of suspension, of leaving oneself,[45] early modern artists make a priority of that effect, both in theory and in the practice of writing. Cervantes left in suspense chapter 8 of the *Quijote*, and makes frequent use of all modalities of suspension: "Don Quixote was amazed, Sancho confused, the scholar in suspense, the page astonished, the braytonswoman all in a gaze, the venter at his wit's end, and all admiring that heard the puppet-man's

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sion: "In catachresis, unlike the delivery of the all-at-onceness in metaphor, the recipient is suspended (…) The forced metaphor, instead of delivering us instantly, defers us (…) The catachresis of indefinite postponement by virtue of false promise can become a Kafkaesque scenario with a powerfully disturbing and uncanny aesthetic of its own (…)" (David Goldblatt, "Forcing Metaphor: Aesthetic Experience and the Suspension of Meaning," *The McNeese Review* 34 [1996]: 67–82, at pp. 74–75).

[44] "aquel bello de las cejas, / tan delgado y tan sutil, / me tuvo un rato suspenso / por si era de puerco espín" (Luis de Góngora, "Cuando yo era muchacho," in *Obras completas*, ed. Millé y Giménez, p. 143).

[45] This effect of evasion becomes a priority, and is combined with the classical *delectare*, as clearly explained in the *Quijote*: "for lying fables must be suited unto the reader's understanding, and so written as that, facilitating impossible things, leveling untrue things, and holding the mind in suspense, they may ravish a more delight, and entertain such manners, as pleasure and wonder may step by step walk together" (Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *The History of Don Quixote of the Mancha*, trans. Thomas Shelton [London, 1896], part I, ch. 47, p. 353); "Hanse de casar las fábulas mentirosas con el entendimiento de los que las leyeren, escribiéndose de suerte que, facilitando los imposibles, allanando las grandezas, suspendiendo los ánimos admiren, suspendan, alborocen y entretengan […]" (Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha*, ed. Florencio Sevilla Arroyo and Antonio Rey Hazas [Madrid, 1994], part I, ch. 47, p. 477).

speech".[46] Other prominent Golden Age writers such as Alonso de Castillo Solórzano and María de Zayas, much to the reader's delight, exploited the same resource by allowing their characters to stroll along endless *periploi*, immersed in what would later be called "dramatic irony". Final *anagnorisis* scenes in *novellas* are not as interesting as suspension, an aesthetic experience for a spectator who makes of the act of reading the perfect conveyor for *suspensio animi*. Take, for instance, Zayas's "Slave to Her Lover",[47] where following the classic Byzantine novel's "adventure time", as defined by Mikhail Bakhtin, the main characters spend this hiatus-time cruising back and forth across the Mediterranean Sea, trying to fulfill rage and jealousy by cross-dressing in costumes, faking apostasies and enduring slavery. The 17th-century *novella* is possibly the genre which best achieves the combination of *suspensio* and shock simultaneously for the reader and for the characters. As Bakhtin put it, "This 'game of fate', its 'suddenlys' and 'at just that moments' make up the entire contents of the novel,"[48] leaving both readers and characters in suspension while waiting for the next twist of fate.

But suspension as aesthetic act cannot be complete at the receptor's end unless it extends to the act of creation itself. We have already seen how it is an essential source of creation in mystical poetry, to which we must add all semiconscious or fully oneiric forms that present themselves as creative venues. From the medieval *locus amoenus*, a propitious space for so many visions, the dreamer's state drifts in a prolonged state of suspension of consciousness. This trance allows access to a superior science, where reality is perceived exactly as it is, free from the deceptions of the eyes and of the world. It is with such lucidity that it appears in the biographies of visionaries, but also embedded in fictional texts like Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz's *Primero sueño*, where the soul escapes to suspension in order to tackle an intellectual consideration of Knowledge itself:

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[46] Cervantes Saavedra, *The History of Don Quixote*, part I, ch. 47, p. 275; "Quedó pasmado don Quijote, absorto Sancho, suspenso el primo, atónito el paje, abobado el del rebuzno, confuso el ventero, y, finalmente, espantados todos los que oyeron las razones del titerero" (Cervantes Saavedra, *El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote*, part II, ch. 25, p. 732).

[47] María de Zayas, *The Disenchantments of Love: A Translation of* Desengaños amorosos *by María de Zayas y Sotomayor*, trans. Harriet Patsy Boyer (New York, 1997).

[48] "Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel," *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin, 1984), p. 92.

At this almost limitless elevation,
jubilant but perplexed,
perplexed but full of pride,
and astonished although proud,
the sovereign queen of this sublunary world
let the probing gaze, by lenses unencumbered,
of her beautiful intellectual eyes
(unperturbed by distance
or worry lest some opaque obstacle
by intervening hide objects from her view)
range unrestricted over all creation.
Such an immense assemblage,
a mass so unencompassable,
though holding out sight
some chance of being taken in,
held none to the understanding, which being dazed
by objects in such profusion, its powers
surpassed by their very magnitude,
turned coward and drew back.[49]

Both authors and authorial characters resort to *suspensio animi* as a fundamental premise guaranteeing that the true poet still possesses an exclusive clarity of vision, the absolute intelligibility of perception reserved to few. Suspension mediating, the author will thus be capable of reflecting contents other than the traditional or the usual, although the means of expression must still be linked—at least partially—to structures he is acquainted with when in possession of judgement (for instance, a strophic order). These attempts would later be gathered and systematically exploited by the historical *Avant-garde*, a pattern synthesized by Salvador Dalí in his renowned "paranoid-critical method". The painter, in fact, carried it on years later, turning it into a very peculiar and unorthodox self-proclaimed mysticism in which ecstasy is the final goal for Dalí to achieve:

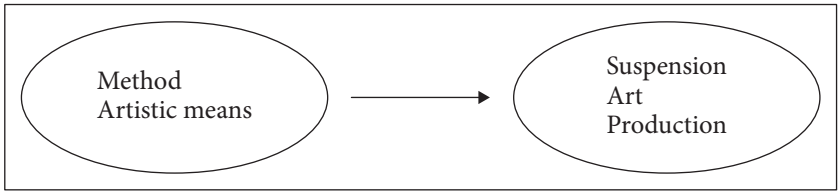
[49] "En cuya casi elevación inmensa, / gozosa mas suspensa, / suspensa pero ufana, / y atónita aunque ufana, la suprema / de lo sublunar Reina soberana, / la vista perspicaz, libre de antojos, / de sus intelectuales bellos ojos / (sin que distancia tema / ni de obstáculo opaco se recele, / de que interpuesto algún objeto cele), / libre tendió por todo lo crïado: / cuyo inmenso agregado, / cúmulo incomprehensible, / aunque a la vista quiso manifiesto / dar señas de posible, / a la comprehensión no, que—entorpecida / con la sobra de objetos, y excedida / de la grandeza de ellos su potencia—/ retrocedió cobarde" (Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Primero sueño y otros escritos*, ed. Elena del Río Parra, [Mexico, 2006], pp. 54–55; *Primero sueño*, in *A Sor Juana Anthology*, trans. Alan S. Trueblood [Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1988], pp. 436–54).

> To penetrate in the core of reality, I have the genial intuition that I have an extraordinary weapon at my disposal: Mysticism, that is, the deep intuition of what it is, the immediate communion with the everything, the absolute vision by grace of truth, by divine grace (…) "Ecstasy to me!" (…) "Saint Theresa of Ávila to me!". And I dived in the most rigorous mystical flight, the most architectonic, the most Pythagorean, and the most extenuating one can imagine. I turned into a saint. I could have turned into an ascetic, but I was a painter (…) I, Dalí, revamping Spanish mysticism, would prove through my work the unity of the universe, and would demonstrate the spirituality of all substance (…) I plastically dematerialized matter, then I spiritualized it in order to create energy (…) I continued with the topic in *Raphaelesque Head Exploding*, and I express a transcendental metaphysical message in my *Mystical Manifesto* (…) Then I painted *Galatea of the Spheres* for her, a painting which synthesized my new mystical science of painting, and my quantified realism technique. In it, every element has its own life, yet contributes to create a transcendental, cosmogonical whole.[50]

For the poet and philosopher María Zambrano, an almost exact contemporary of Salvador Dalí, this attitude extends, as well as to the creature, to the core of the creator, as a fundamental way of life. In "Poetry and Metaphysics", she describes how this extreme is achieved without any intervention from the creator, who just has to live as was intended:

> And that is the pursuit of poetry: to share the dream, to make primal innocence communicable; to share loneliness, undoing life, traveling time in the opposite way, undoing the steps; going out of one's way. The philosopher lives forward, moving away from the origin, searching for "him-self" in solitude, isolating and estranging himself from man-

[50] "Para penetrar en el meollo de la realidad, tengo la intuición genial de que dispongo de un arma extraordinaria: el misticismo, es decir, la intuición profunda de lo que es, la comunión inmediata con el todo, la visión absoluta por la gracia de la verdad, por la gracia divina (…) «¡A mí el éxtasis! (…) ¡A mí Santa Teresa de Ávila!». Y me sumergí en el vuelo místico más riguroso, el más arquitectónico, el más pitagórico y el más extenuante que imaginarse pueda. Me convertí en un santo. Hubiera podido convertirme en un asceta pero yo era pintor (…) Yo, Dalí, reactualizando el misticismo español, probaría con mi obra la unidad del universo y demostraría la espiritualidad de toda sustancia (…) Desmaterializaba plásticamente la materia, y a continuación la espiritualizaba para conseguir crear la energía (…) Proseguí el tema en la *Cabeza rafaelesca estallando* y expreso un mensaje metafísico trascendente en mi *Manifiesto místico* (…) Después pinté para ella *Galatea de las esferas*, cuadro que sintetizaba mi nueva ciencia mística de la pintura y mi técnica del realismo cuantificado. En él, cada elemento tiene vida propia, pero contribuye a crear un conjunto cosmogónico que lo trasciende" (Salvador Dalí, "Cómo rogar a Dios sin creer en él," *Confesiones inconfesables*, in *Obra completa*, vol. 2: *Textos autobiográficos* [Barcelona, 2003], pp. 603–07).



2. Diagram 2

> kind. The poet un-lives, moving away from his possible "him-self" for the love of origin.[51]

Going back to the beginning of our incursion, we find that *suspensio animi* in the arts does not correspond to any of the models defined by positivistic and moral sciences, but instead to a third which is a hybrid of both. This proposal would place suspension as a product, as an effect, and as creation in itself, methodically embedded in different artistic resources, as Diagram 2 shows (see Figure 2). Suspension is, hence, a paradoxical discourse, one that congregates the very resources it lacks, manifesting without any manifestation capabilities, stating new limits to creation (even relegating it to mediation, if we will), to the point of containing vacuum. Either as permanent or transitory state, befallen or provoked; as an effect sought by the reader through a character's soliloquy; as authorial fiction / linguistic dislocation; or as a consequence of narcotic substances, divine intervention, or human will, the literary and artistic revolution propelled by mystical poetry makes a full stop in *suspensio animi* as an aesthetic act, axle of creativity and ground zero for creation in its fullest state.

[51] "Y eso persigue la poesía: compartir el sueño, hacer la inocencia primera comunicable; compartir la soledad, deshaciendo la vida, recorriendo el tiempo en sentido inverso, deshaciendo los pasos; desviviéndose. El filósofo vive hacia adelante, alejándose del origen, buscándose a 'sí mismo' en la soledad, aislándose y alejándose de los hombres. El poeta se desvive, alejándose de su posible 'sí mismo' por amor al origen" (María Zambrano, "Poesía y metafísica," *Obras reunidas de María Zambrano* [Madrid, 1971], p. 196).

"THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY": MUSIC AND MYSTICISM IN GOLDEN AGE SPAIN

Tess Knighton*

> Aquí la alma navega
> por un mar de dulzura, y, finalmente,
> en él ansi se anega…
>
> —Fray Luis de León, "Ode to Salinas"[1]

Fray Luis de León's ode to Francisco de Salinas describes, in verses of ineffable beauty, the moment when the soul, awakened by the blind organist's music, transcends such *música mundana* to become one with God through the divine harmony of the music of the spheres. The moment of union between soul and God soon passes, and the poet begs his friend Salinas (1513–90) to play continuously so that he might know again the eternal playing of "el gran maestro". The poem has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention and inspired many different interpretations: from a description of purely aesthetic ecstasy; to a commentary on friendship (human and divine); to the recreation of a mystical experience.[2] O'Reilly has also argued quite convincingly that Salinas, who was Professor of Music at Salamanca University in the second half of the 16th century, may have experienced "the close union with God that transforms the poet". In this reading, the blind musician enabled inner sight in the poet and mystic.[3]

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* I am very grateful to Thirza Hope for her invaluable help in the preparation of this article.

[1] "Here the soul sails / through a sea of sweetness, and, finally, / is overwhelmed by it". The edition of the poem used throughout this article is *Fray Luis de León, poesías completas: propias, imitaciones y traducciones*, ed. Cristóbal Cuevas (Madrid, 2001), pp. 94–95. My translation.

[2] Useful summaries of the thinking on Fray Luis de León's poem can be found in Terence O'Reilly, "The Ode to Francisco Salinas," in Salvador Bacarisse et al., eds, *What's Past is Prologue: A Collection of Essays in Honour of L. J. Woodward* (Edinburgh, 1984), pp. 107–13; and Audrey Lumsden Kouvel, "El gran citarista del cielo: el concepto renacentista de la 'música mundana' en la 'Oda a Francisco de Salinas' de Fray Luis de León," in Christiane Augner, ed., *Gedichte der Ekstase in der Literatur des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen, 2001), pp. 219–27.

[3] O'Reilly, "The Ode to Francisco Salinas," pp. 111–12.

My reason for wishing to revisit the poem as the starting point for this essay is to explore the musical tropes underlying Fray Luis's mystical homage to his friend Salinas, with the aim of bringing the relationship between music and mysticism in the 16th century into sharper focus. The key moment in the seventh verse of the poem—the seventh step on the ladder to heaven—is represented by the simple word "aquí": what is this "here", and how did the poet (or, rather, his soul) reach "here"? This moment of mystical union is evoked through a rich complex of imagery and association; but, in my view, it is underpinned by two strands of musical thinking in the 16th century: music's ability to inspire devotion and the contemplation of heavenly matters, and the idea of celestial music whose underlying universal harmony affords a point of contact between the soul and divine wisdom—in other words, a glimpse of the ineffable. Clearly, these tropes tap into others, notably the Orpheus myth, the Pythagorean notion of perfect ratio, and the harmony of the spheres, widely disseminated through Plato's *Republic* and *Timaeus*. These ideas are also woven into the rich texture of Fray Luis's poem, and, as Francisco Rico has pointed out, should be considered "rudiments of learning of the period" rather than commonplaces.[4]

Salinas's ability to move his listeners is recounted in a more prosaic (but nonetheless significant) passage by a contemporary who studied at Salamanca, the historian Ambrosio de Morales (1513–91):

> I am justified in calling you [Salinas] celebrated, since your understanding of music is such that I have seen you vary your playing and singing so that within a short space of time you inspire very different emotions of sadness and happiness, energy and repose, with such effect that I am no longer amazed at what Pythagoras was supposed to have done with music, nor at what Augustine claims can be done with it.[5]

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[4] "Nos hallamos, insisto, no ante lugares comunes, sino ante los rudimentos del saber de la época" (Francisco Rico, "Unidad y harmonía: la *Oda a Salinas* y *Los nombres de Cristo*," in *Historia y crítica de la literatura española*, vol. 2: *Siglos de Oro: Renacimiento*, ed. Francisco López Estrada [Barcelona, 1980], pp. 412–18, at p. 415). Lumsden Kouvel has also made a convincing case for Macrobius's *Somnium Scipionem* as a model for Fray Luis (see Lumsden Kouvel, "El gran citarista del cielo," pp. 221–23). These tropes are also found in other cultural traditions, notably Judaism and Islam, but consideration of these broader resonances falls beyond the scope of this essay.

[5] "Con mucha razón le llamo insigne varón, pues tiene tan profunda intelligencia en la Música, que yo le he visto con mudarla tañendo y cantando, poner en poco espacio en los ánimos diferentíssimos movimientos de tristeza y alegría; de impetus y

Clearly, the Orphic trope is brought into play here, as it is repeatedly in musical discourse throughout the 16th century and beyond; but it is fair to assume that Morales knew Salinas, his exact contemporary, in Salamanca and had heard him perform. His citation of Pythagoras and Augustine is crucial to an understanding of Fray Luis's poem, with its evocation of the harmony of the spheres and its tacit assumption of the ability of music to awaken the soul to contemplation of the divine.

Pythagorean theories of ratio and number in music, corresponding to the music of the spheres, formed the bedrock of Renaissance music theory in Spain, being disseminated there especially through the works of Boethius and Isidore of Seville. Isidore summed up the theoretical notion of the music of the spheres in his *Etymologiarum* (*c.*630), in a section whose title ("What Music Can Do") echoes Morales:

> Thus without music no discipline can be perfect, for there is nothing without it. For the very universe, it is said, is held together by a certain harmony of sounds, and the heavens themselves are made to revolve by the modulation of harmony. Music moves the emotions and awakens a variety of feelings in the soul.[6]

Isidore describes some of the effects of music—how David's music released Saul's soul from the evil spirit, and how it moved animals—and adds: "Furthermore, all of which we speak and feel in the inner pulse of our veins is linked by a hidden intuition for rhythm and harmony". This is an idea drawn from Plato and echoed by Augustine when he speaks of the "hidden affinity" between music and the soul.[7]

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de reposo, con tanta fuerça que ya no me espantó lo que de Pythágoras escriven hazia con la música, ni lo que Santo Agustino dize se puede hazer con ella" (Ambrosio de Morales, *Los cinco libros de la Crónica general de España* [Córdoba, 1586]; cited in Francisco José León Tello, *Estudios de la historia de la teoría musical* [Madrid, 1962], p. 559).

[6] "Itaque sine Musica nulla disciplina potest esse perfecta, nihil enim sine illa. Nam ut ipse mundus quadam harmonia sonorum fertur esse compositus, et caelum ipsud sub harmoniae modulatione revolvi. Musica movet affectus, provocat in diversum habitum sensus" (Isidore of Seville, *Etimologías*, ed. José Oroz Reta and Manuel-A. Marcos Casquero [Madrid, 2000], Book 3, Chapter 17/1: "Quid possit musica," pp. 444–45).

[7] "Sed et quidquid loquimur, vel intrinsecus venarum pulsibus conmovemur, per musicos rythmos harmoniae virtutibus probatur esse sociatum" (Isidore, *Etimologías*, pp. 444–45); Henry Chadwick, *Boethius: The Consolations of Music, Logic, Theology, and Philosophy* (Oxford, 1981), p. 45.

Also of particular interest as regards Fray Luis's "Ode to Salinas" is the idea discussed by Plato in the *Cratylus* of Apollo, as god of concord, presiding over the cosmic harmony of the heavenly bodies as well as of earthly music.[8] In light of this, Fray Luis's reference to the "apolíneo sacro coro" in verse 6 would reinforce the notion of Salinas, the performing musician, as the conduit between earthly and celestial music.[9] It was commonly held that mortal ears could not hear the music of the spheres, associated by commentators in the Christian tradition with the celestial music that surrounded God in heaven, and judged to be the primal music that resulted from the number and proportion with which He created the universe. The relationship between music, contemplation and mystical union is expressed succinctly in the last verse of an earlier poem by the vihuelist Luis de Narváez, included at the end of his *Los seis libros del Delphín*, published in Valladolid in 1538. This was surely a work known to Salinas and, I would suggest, to Fray Luis:

> To raise one's essence
> higher than any bird
> evokes majesty,
> and sweet music
> is of this nature.
> It lifts understanding,
> so raised on high in contemplation
> that it takes you in an instant
> to the Divine Dwelling-place,
> for there can be found its perfection.[10]

The notion of the "Divine Dwelling-place" inevitably brings to mind Saint Teresa of Ávila's *Moradas*, and Narváez's lines also foreshadow Fray Luis's ode in their description of music's ability to waft the mind to contemplation, as well as its key role in mystical union.

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[8] Chadwick, *Boethius: The Consolations*, p. 79.

[9] Macrobius also develops the idea of Apollo as presiding over the heavenly choir, and of the human soul retaining a subconscious memory of the heavenly music—that is, the music of the spheres—from before the fall of Mankind. See Lumsden Kouvel, "El gran citarista del cielo," pp. 221–23.

[10] "Es subir su propiedad / más alto que ningún ave / significa magestad / y desta conformedad / es la música suave. / Que sube el entendimiento / tan alto en contemplación / que le pone en un momento / en el divino aposento / porque allí es su perfección" (Luys de Narváez, *Los seis libros del Delphín de musica de cifra para tañer vihuela* [Valladolid, 1538], facs. ed. [Geneva, 1980], p. 213).

The significance of Morales's other point of reference, Augustine, comes into play here. In Book 9 of his *Confessions*, Augustine describes how he was moved by the singing of the hymns and canticles in church, and how "[t]hose voices flowed into my ears, and truth was distilled in my heart, and a feeling of piety welled up from it."[11] In Book 10 he treats the matter in greater depth, noting that

> our minds are moved more religiously and ardently toward the flame of piety by these holy words, when they are sung in this way, than if they are not so sung; and that all feelings of our spirit, in its various dispositions, have their own modes in voice and song, which are stirred up because of some hidden affinity with them.[12]

In a key passage for later advocates of the use of music in church (as well as detractors from it), Augustine admits that he was at times guilty of the purely sensual enjoyment occasioned by music, and he acknowledges this to be a weakness; but in general he favors "the custom of singing in church, in order that the weaker mind may rise to the disposition of piety through these delights of hearing".[13] This notion lies at the heart of the justification of music in church by musicians, theorists and cathedral chapters during the 16th century, as will be discussed below. Augustine makes a further distinction in his ability to be moved by the words being sung, rather than by the singing itself, "provided they [the words] are sung in a clear voice and with the most appropriate modulation".[14] This idea is developed in Fray Luis's poem when, in the final verse, the poet beseeches Salinas to play continuously so that with his music ("son") in his ears, his senses are awakened to the "bien divino" while remaining deadened to all else:

> Ah! may I hear your music
> unceasingly resound, Salinas,
> through whom my senses
> are awakened to the divine good,
> and deadened to all else.[15]

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[11] Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Vernon J. Bourke (Washington, D.C., 1966), p. 241.

[12] Augustine, *Confessions*, pp. 306–07.

[13] Augustine, *Confessions*, pp. 307–08.

[14] Augustine, *Confessions*, p. 307.

[15] "¡Oh! suene de contino, / Salinas, vuestro son en mis oídos, / por quien al bien divino / despiertan los sentidos, / quedando a lo demás amortecidos" (Luis de León, "Oda a Salinas," in *Fray Luis de León, poesías completas*, ed. Cuevas, p. 97, verse 10).

Here Fray Luis, in the rapture triggered by Salinas's playing, suggests the intuitive sense of cosmic harmony and rhythm described by Isidore.

While some mystical writers continued to view music as a potentially dangerous distraction because of the direct appeal to the senses described by Augustine through his personal experience, others acknowledged its efficacy as an aid to contemplation, especially as part of divine worship; and this more positive view was in turn used by composers to enhance the usefulness of their works, as well as by ecclesiastical institutions to justify expenditure on musical resources to solemnify liturgical celebrations. Several questions arise here: were the works of Spanish composers considered by their contemporaries to be mystical, and did Spanish composers of the 16th century consider themselves to be mystics? Or do these ideas result from a more recent construct of musical historiography? Certainly, later 16th-century composers of sacred music show themselves to be aware of a responsibility to incite the hearts of men toward God (how could they not, in the age of the Council of Trent, where these matters were debated at length?).[16] A contemporary description of the Sevillian chapelmaster Francisco Guerrero by Francisco Pacheco (1564–1644), Velázquez's father-in-law, draws on the music and mysticism discourse in an unusually direct way:

> He wrote a great quantity of Masses, Magnificats and Psalms; among the last named is "In exitu Israel de Aegypto", which those who are best informed declare he must have composed while swept aloft in contemplative ecstasy.[17]

[16] See Craig Monson, "The Council of Trent Revisited," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 55 (2002): 1–37; and Craig Monson, "Renewal, Reform, and Reaction in Catholic Music," in James Haar, ed., *European Music 1520–1640* (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 401–21.

[17] "Compuso muchas missas, magníficas i psalmos; i entre ellos, *in exitu Israel de Aegypto*, de quien los que mejor sienten juzgan que estava entonces arrebatado en alta contemplación" (Francisco Pacheco, *Libro de descripción de verdaderos retratos, de ilustres y memorables varones* [Seville, 1599], ed. Pedro M Piñero and Rogelio Reyes [Seville, 1985], p. 338). To conclude his description of Guerrero, Pacheco reproduces the elegy, originally written in Latin by Jacome Barbosa Lusitano, in the translation by Gerónimo González de Villanueva, which includes the tercets: "Arrebatado en celestial decoro / suelta la voz, quien suspense mira, / la escuela bella del impíreo coro // No ya de Apolo la dorada liria, / no ya del Trace el doloroso canto, / la edad passada o la presente admira" (Pacheco, *Libro de descripción*, p. 340).

It is not clear, unfortunately, from Pacheco's description who "those who are best informed" were: members of the clergy at Seville Cathedral, perhaps? Or those who moved in the circles of the cultural and social elite portrayed by Pacheco? It seems unlikely that Guerrero would have regarded himself as a mystic; though he clearly felt the need, following the strictures of the Council of Trent, to justify the continued use of polyphonic settings of liturgical texts through music's ability to bring about celestial union. This urgency can be seen from the dedication to Pope Pius V in his *Motecta* of 1570:

> Those who would set sacred things to music certainly use the nature of this divine faculty correctly, for there is no smoother balm with which to calm the affects of the body or soul, and likewise there is nothing more effective to purify more sacredly, as we say, our mind and to effect our union with celestial things.[18]

Guerrero argues against those who wish to ban music from church and impose silence on the grounds that music is and has always been central to divine worship; there is, he contends, no "nation so barbarous or savage that, once imbued of the idea of some deity, does not at that instant add song to its rites", an idea that is echoed in Salinas's *De libri septem musica* of 1577.[19] Guerrero expresses his desire to counter the claims of those who are against music in church through his sacred works, his dual aim being "to move the souls of holy men, and to compose better works day by day". Victoria, too (in the dedication to Philip II in his *Missarum libri duo* of 1583), puts forward his reasons for developing his God-given talent as a composer in the composition of sacred music:

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[18] "Qui musicen ad res sacras accommodarunt, recte ille quidem divinae huius facultatis naturam intellexisse videntur, ut enim ad sedandas cum corporis, tum animi affections nullum levamentum iucundis, ita ad sacratiorem quandam mentis purgationem, et conciliandam cum superis societatem efficatius est…cum nulla sit upsiam gentium adeo efferata barbaries, qui cum alicuius numinis opinio imbuerit, non ipsa protinus intelligat ad eius quales caeremonias modulationem adhibendam…ad huius modi officiis piorum animos demerendos, et meliora in dies cudenda alacriorem" (cited in Todd Borgerding, *The Motet and Spanish Religiosity, ca.1550–1610*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Michigan, 1997, pp. 24–25).

[19] "Nulla enim tam barbara gens vnquam inuenta est, quae dios, quos coleret non metris ac canticis veneraretur" (Francisco de Salinas, *De musica libri septem* [Salamanca, 1577], fol. 4v; Spanish translation in *Francisco Salinas: siete libros sobre la música*, ed. Ismael Fernández de la Cuesta, Colección Opera Omnia [Madrid, 1983], pp. 23–24).

> For what else should Music rather serve than the sacred praises of the immortal God from whom number and proportion are derived? Whose whole works are so perfect that they admirably display and show a certain harmony and sound? … Indeed, no greater nor more weighty justification for singing in concerted harmony and singing melodiously can be put forward than the sacred mystery of the Mass and the communion.[20]

For Victoria, then, the purpose of music—an art form intrinsic to the act of creation through number and proportion—is to serve the Creator. As might be expected in the dedication to a book of polyphonic mass settings, it is deemed entirely appropriate for the celebration of mass and Holy Communion. A tendency towards mysticism on Victoria's part has been assumed from the same 1583 dedication to Philip II, in which he expressed a desire to return to Spain, where he would give up composing and lead a more contemplative life, devoting his thoughts "as befits a priest, to the contemplation of heavenly matters".[21] Yet it is clear that he did not stop writing music, and that, on the contrary—in addition to his post as chaplain and organist to the Empress María of Austria at the Descalzas Reales in Madrid—he pursued a wide range of different administrative concerns, including involvement in the music printing activities of the Imprenta Real around 1600.[22]

The relationship between music and contemplation is also much discussed by music theorists of the period. Salinas himself expressed the need for music in church on the grounds that

> … music makes us more religious. And this is absolutely clear. Music performed in church raises us to the contemplation of the celestial. This is especially the case on feast days when more is sung, and sung with greater skill and sweetness. This is why there are choirs of monks and

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[20] "Cui enim rei potius servire Musicam decet, quam sacris laudibus immortalis Dei a quo numerus et mensura manavit? Cuius opera universa ita sunt admirabiliter quamdam harmoniam, contentumque preseferant et ostendant? … Nullum vero argumentum ad concinendum modulandumque musico proponi maius aut gravius potest, quam sacrosanctum Missae mysterium, ac sacrificium" (Tomás Luis de Victoria, dedication to Philip II, in *Missarum libri duo* [Rome: Alessandro Gardano, 1583]).

[21] "volui ut defessus, commentandi finem iam facerem, et aliquando perfunctus laboribus honesto in otio conquiescerem, animumque ad divinam, ut sacerdotem decet, contemplationem traducerem…" (Victoria, dedication to Philip II, in *Missarum libri duo*).

[22] Almost a century ago Pedrell collected a significant number of documents to show Victoria's administrative capacity (Felipe Pedrell, ed., *Thomae Ludovici Victoria Abulensis: Opera omnia*, 7 vols [Leipzig, 1911]), pp. lxxxiii–xci). These, together with the composer's correspondence, have recently been reassessed in Alfonso de Vicente, ed., *Tomás Luis de Victoria: Cartas (1582–1606)* (Madrid, 2008).

> canons. For thus, like the angels in heaven who are constantly before the throne of divine majesty singing and praising God with the most beautiful melodies and rhythms, as the Holy Church sings "the sonorous voice is always heard singing new melodies", thus also these human choirs of men dedicated to God sing in their vigils, to the best of their ability, to the eternal and bountiful God.[23]

The composer, therefore, has a responsibility to his performers and listeners; and—as the theorist Juan Bermudo argues in his *Declaración de instrumentos* (1555)—the true musician will "compose honest music that invites and awakens [the listener] to incline to virtue and the service of God".[24] A corollary to this idea, commonly expressed in Spanish theoretical writings from at least 1498, is that sacred music is "celestial armonía divina", but secular music "by inclining hearts to evil desires, disturbs men's minds and makes them libidinous, foolish, discordant and mired in vice"; however, as music is both "a divine and a human science, it inspires and raises hearts to the love of God".[25] Musicians and mystics both suggest that the state of grace (or otherwise) of the listener will determine the effect, good or bad, of music on the mind: the vihuelist Luis Venegas de Henestrosa comments in 1558 that a sinner will inevitably take delight in the sensual arousal caused by music, while a virtuous or saintly person will be incited to contemplation.[26] Victoria also acknowledged the inherent danger in

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[23] "Religiosores autem à musica nos redid manifestum est: valde enim erigimur ad rerum caelestium contemplationem modulationibus & canticis, quae in templis audiuntur; quod in sacris solennibus experimur, in quibus maiori cum artificio & suauitate cantatur. Nec alia de causa choros monachorum, aut canonicorum in terris institutos fuisse credibile est, nisi, vt, quemadmodum caelestibus in choris angeli Deo semper asistunt, pulcherrimus eius laudes melodijs ac rhythmis celebrantes, vbi, vt sancta canit Ecclesia, 'Novas semper harmonias vox meloda concrepat'. Sic enim terrenis in his choros viri religios: semper Hymnis ac Psalmis canendis inuigilarent, & quo meliore possent modo Deum Optim. Maximumque laudarent" (Salinas, *De musica libri septem*, fol. 4v; Spanish translation in Fernández de la Cuesta, *Francisco Salinas*, pp. 22–23).

[24] "Los que quisieran mostrar ser músicos, compongan Música honesta que combide y despierte a la virtud y al servicio de Dios, a imitación de los Santos y de los músicos graves" (Juan Bermudo, *Comiença el libro llamado Declaración de instrumentos* [Osuna, 1555], Libro I, fol. 40v; cited in León Tello, *Estudios de la historia*, p. 258).

[25] "inclinando los coraçones a malo deseos faze a los ombres ser desvariados, libidinosos, desatinados, desacordes e mucho embueltos en vicios"; "Como es sciencia divina y humana enciende y provoca los coraçones en el amor de Dios" (Domingo Marcos Durán, *Comento sobre* Lux bella [Salamanca, 1498], fol. aIIv, facs. ed., Viejos Libros de Música 2 [Madrid, 1976]; cited in León Tello, *Estudios de la historia*, p. 232).

[26] "if one is in mortal sin, [music] makes him worse, and if in a state of grace, better, because it affords a very useful medium for prayer and to raise the soul to that

music to lead men astray through its appeal to the senses.[27] Such ideas had their roots, as discussed above, in Augustine and were commonly developed by non-musicians such as the Franciscan mystic Fray Juan de los Ángeles (1536–1609), preacher to María of Austria in the Monastery of Las Descalzas Reales and surely known to Victoria. In his *Manual de vida perfecta* (1608), Fray Juan also seeks to distinguish between music's potential for good (in a true contemplative) and its insidious ability merely to arouse the senses:

> Thou wilt find some that say mysteriously, as though none should understand them, that music is a heavenly thing and uplifts the spirit; and that, when they hear it, they experience (so it seems to them) feelings most spiritual. But the truth is that all this is no more than sensuality, wherein they feel this manner of joy, devotion or pleasure. And this is clear and evident, because the same effects are caused in those that know not what is meant by "spirit," nor have aught to do therewith. Quite other are the effects of music upon true contemplatives, who, when they hear the music of the organ or of other instruments, put from them the pleasure, outward and physical, which is caused by the sounds, and pass to the contemplation of interior matters, and to the spirituality that corresponds with the harmonic accords that strike the ear.[28]

For Fray Juan de los Ángeles, the "true" contemplative's musical experience would lead his mind to a different plane, just as Salinas's music was able to do for Fray Luis.

The theologian's viewpoint is expressed at greater length in the writings of Martín de Azpilcueta (1492–1586), professor in canon law

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Composer, who ordered the whole of creation in harmony and music" ("si halla uno en pecado mortal, hácele peor y si en gracia, mejor: porque es un medio muy conveniente para la oración y para levantar el espíritu a aquel componedor, que todo lo criado ordenó en concordancia y música") (Luis Venegas de Henestrosa, prologue to *Libro de cifra nueva para tecla, harpa y vihuela* [Alcalá de Henares, 1557], fol. 3r; cited in H. Anglés, *La música en la corte de Carlos V* [Barcelona, 1944], p. 152).

[27] This idea is expressed in the dedication to Michele Bonello, nephew of Pius V, of his *Cantica B. Virginis per annum* (Rome: Dominicus Basa, 1581): "For certain wicked men tainted with sinful habits abuse this skill and make it an allurement to submerge themselves deep in the earthly delights, rather than a means by which they may be joyfully raised up to God and the contemplation of heavenly matters" ("Quippe ea improbi quidam ac pravie moribus imbuit hoines abutuntur potius tamquam invitamento, quo se in terram terranque voluptates penitas immergant, quam instrumento quo ad Deum divinaruntque rerum contemplationem feliciter evehantur" (cited in Henri Collet, *Le mysticisme musical espagnol au XVIe siècle* [Paris, 1913], p. 395).

[28] Juan de los Ángeles, *Manual*, Diálogo 1, sección 2; cited in E. Allison Peers, *Studies of the Spanish Mystics*, 2nd ed. (London, 1951), p. 313 (his translation).

at Toulouse, Salamanca and Coimbra in the mid-16th-century. His important contribution to the debate on the role of music in prayer is included in his *Enchiridion sive manuale de oratione et horis canonicis*. This was first published in Spanish in 1545, and subsequently printed many times in Latin, his complete works appearing in Lyon in 1589, Rome in 1590, Venice in 1602 and Cologne in 1615.[29] Azpilcueta's tract, as we—and a 16th-century reader—would expect, refers to the Bible, Augustine, Ambrose, Gregory and Thomas Aquinas to justify music's use in church. However, he makes the distinction that music should not be seen so much as pleasing to God, as designed for man's benefit, since it has the power to incite people to devotion and prepare their hearts for prayer.[30] Music should only be included in the liturgy for this purpose, and—in order to ensure that both listeners and singers are inspired to devotion—the words must be clearly audible, as should, at all times, the plainchant melody associated with them.[31] The potential dangers of music are also discussed at length: Azpilcueta condemns those who pay more attention to the musical setting than to the meaning of the words, criticizes those who pay more attention to ignorant singers than to a good preacher, and launches a scathing attack on those singers who do not perform their duties with due

[29] On Martín de Azpilcueta, see Francisco José León Tello, *Estudios de la historia de la teoría musical* (Madrid, 1962), pp. 267–80; and Bonnie J. Blackburn, "How to Sin in Music: Doctor Navarrus on Sixteenth-Century Singers," in Melania Bucciarelli and Berta Joncus, eds, *Music as Social and Cultural Practice: Essays in Honour of Reinhard Strohm* (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 86–102. The notion (erroneous, in Azpilcueta's view) that music was pleasing to God is clearly expressed in Narváez's poem: "porque a Dios mucho le aplazen / sus oficios bien cantados" (Narváez, *Los seis libros del Delphín*, [p. 213]).

[30] "Cantus enim est occasio et praeparatio ad magis et melius orationi attendendum" (cited in León Tello, *Estudios de la historia*, p. 271). See also Blackburn, "How to Sin in Music," pp. 90, 93.

[31] "Non esse amplius cantandum in divinis oficiis quam conveniat ad incitandam et augendam devotionem canentium, et audientium, declarando, quantus et quanto maior vel minor respectus haberi debeat ad devotionem audientium, quam canentium" (cited in León Tello, *Estudios de la historia*, p. 271, and Blackburn, "How to Sin in Music," pp. 90–93). Azpilcueta did, however, recommend variety in music, both different types of texts (psalms, antiphons, etc.) and of settings (polyphony and chant), to keep those attending awake: "Quod licet multis respectibus bonis, dant religiosi (mea sententia) excellentes, dicant totum officium diurnum et nocturnum unisona voce, nihilominus tamen simpliciter, et de se longe melius sit dicere illud diversi sona… Quod omne unisonum fastidit, fatigat, et provocat somnum, adimit attentionem et delectationem ei, qui cantat, dicit, vel audit" (cited in León Tello, *Estudios de la historia*, p. 272).

reverence for the meaning of the text.[32] For him, as for Augustine, music can be justified in church if it is performed with due reverence (as it was, he claims by way of an example, in a convent in Coimbra) and if the words are clearly audible. In particular, he favours *fabordón*, which both preserves the integrity of the chant and allows the words to be heard clearly, while adding some variety to the celebration of the liturgy. It is interesting that he singles out German, Flemish and French singers who, he says, claim that the listener can be moved to devotion through the power of the polyphony itself and so believe that there is no need to "explain" the text.[33] He is not against polyphony in church altogether, since there are singers "who with humility and devotion sing a motet or something else that is not obligatory (or something that is) equally well or even better, so that one hears and understands the words and is moved by them."[34] Azpilcueta is here placing at least as much emphasis on the performance manner as the style of a composition; but his distinction between the singing of music of a highly contrapuntal nature (and the manner of performance) by northern European musicians and the simpler, chordal *fabordón* style used in Coimbra and elsewhere in the Iberian Peninsula is particularly striking, especially given that his comments were first published well before any conclusions as regards music had been reached at the Council of Trent. It is also of interest that the chant-based, homophonic idiom closest to *fabordón* was more widely cultivated among Spanish composers, especially in texts relating to Holy Week and the Office and Mass of the Dead, than among their Franco-Netherlandish counterparts. It was these settings in particular that, as will be discussed below, the historiography of 16th-century Spanish music came to describe as mystical.[35]

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[32] León Tello, *Estudios de la historia*, pp. 272–5; and Blackburn, "How to Sin in Music," pp. 98–102, where the Appendix presents both the Castilian and Latin texts. The topic of the respective benefits of a good preacher and music and dance is also brought up in an anecdote concerning Saint Teresa; see below at note 55.

[33] "mayormente entre aquellos Alemanes, Flamencos, y Franceses, que non explican la letra, diziendo que por solo el canto, sin las fuerças della los buenos cantores han de mover a sus oyentes" (cited in Blackburn, "How to Sin in Music," pp. 90, 97).

[34] "Porque algunas vezes se ayuntan cantores tambien callados, tan mesurados, tan devotos, tambien compuestos, que con humildad y devocion cantan un mote u otra cosa, que no es de obligation, o de tal manera cantan lo obligatorio, que tambien o mejor se oye, entiende y mueve la letra cantandola ellos assi" (cited in Blackburn, "How to Sin in Music," pp. 91, 99).

[35] Bonnie Blackburn has termed this the "devotional style"; see Bonnie J. Blackburn, "The Dispute about Harmony *c.*1500 and the Creation of a New Style," in

Despite Azpilcueta's many objections and restrictions regarding the use of music in church, he clearly upheld Augustine's view that it was nevertheless justified in the liturgy as long as it served to increase devotion and inspire people to meditate on the sacred texts and pray. This was also the justification used by ecclesiastical institutions throughout the 16th century for the employment and use of singers and instrumentalists. For example, the *Consueta* of Granada Cathedral, dated around 1509–14, decreed that polyphonic music and singers capable of performing it should be paid

> in order to enhance divine worship and so that the church may be more honored and the divine offices better celebrated and so that the people may be more consoled and inspired to devotion, there should be singers, as has always been the custom.[36]

The establishment of a salaried wind band at Seville Cathedral in 1553 was justified in similar terms: the Holy Scriptures allow for all kinds of "musica onesta", especially in a cathedral of the size and importance of Seville, and this kind of honest music is considered particularly good in processions on major feast days:

> this music is useful because it allows the processions to proceed with more honor, authority, and devotion, and incites more devotion and affect in the people and moves them to accompany the processions and come to the divine offices in the cathedral.[37]

Contemporary descriptions of such processions picked up on the same trope; the author (Francisco Luque Fajardo) of the *relación* of the ceremonies held in Seville for the beatification of Saint Ignatius Loyola describes all the different kinds of music—hymns, motets, *villancicos* and *letras*—performed by the cathedral singers and instrumentalists

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Anne-Emmanuelle Ceulemans & Bonnie J. Blackburn, eds, *Théorie et analyse musicales 1450–1650 / Music Theory and Analysis* (Louvain-La-Neuve, 2001), pp. 1–37. On the chant-based style in early polyphonic settings in Spain, see Kenneth Kreitner, *The Church Music of Fifteenth-Century Spain*, Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Music 2 (Woodbridge, 2004).

[36] "por el augmento del culto divino y porque sea la iglesia más honrada y el culto divino más favorescido y el pueblo sea más consolado y provocado a devoción, han mandado que aya cantores, y así se ha siempre usado" (José López-Calo, *La música en la Catedral de Granada en el siglo XVI*, 2 vols [Granada, 1963], 1: 68).

[37] "conviene mucho la dicha musica para yr mas honradas y autorizadas y devotas las dichas proçesiones y para que con mas devoçion y afeçion se muevan y incite el pueblo a las acompañar y venir a los divinos ofiçios a la sancta yglesia" (Seville Cathedral, 1553, Actas, lib. 20, fol. 57; cited in Borgerding, *The Motet and Spanish Religiosity*, pp. 68–69).

along the route of the procession, as well as the plainchant intoned by the priests, with the overall effect of inspiring devotion in those who heard it: "so that everything together created a heavenly consonance and harmony, inciting fervent devotion in the listeners who crowded along the route."[38] With some reservations, then, music's ability to move the listener to devotion during the liturgy, or extra-liturgical celebrations such as processions where the public might be drawn into the church to attend the liturgical ceremonies as a result, was a widely diffused *topos* that could be used to justify expenditure on musicians and the inclusion of a variety of musical genres.

What were the attitudes towards music of the mystical writers themselves? Most, including the austere Dominican Luis de Granada (1505–88), accepted that music had a role in the celebration of the liturgy; in the fifth chapter of his widely disseminated *Libro de la oración y meditación*, first published in Salamanca in 1554,[39] under the general heading "De algunos avisos que se deben tener en estos ejercicios" ("Of some warnings that must be had in these exercises"), he acknowledges the importance of "oración vocal", prayer that is spoken—or sung—aloud:

> And, furthermore, even the sound of the voice, especially when the divine office is sung, can be helpful in its way for devotion, as Saint Augustine confesses happened to him when he heard voices raised in song and the music resounding in church.[40]

Once again, Augustine's *Confessions* are invoked to justify music as part of the liturgy. However, for Luis de Granada, as for mystical writers in general, there existed a very clear-cut distinction between music heard as part of the liturgy and its use in private devotions. In Chapter 2, "De las cosas que ayudan para alcanzar la verdadera devoción"

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[38] "que todo junto hazia una celestial consonancia, y armonia, siendo motivo de afervorada devocion a los oyentes, que eran de apretados concursos" (cited in Borgerding, *The Motet and Spanish Religiosity,* pp. 85–86).

[39] This was one of the books, along with Augustine's *Quinquagenas*, that Fray Luis requested in 1572 at the start of his imprisonment by the Inquisition in Valladolid; see Gregorio Mayans y Siscar, "Vida y juicio del Maestro Fray Luis de León," in *Escritores del siglo XVI*, vol. 2: *Obras del Fray Luis de León*, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles 37 (Madrid, 1855), pp. i–xvi, at p. xxv.

[40] "Y, además de esto, aun el sonido de la voz, especialmente cuando se cantan los oficios divinos ayudan también en su manera a la devocion, como sant Agustín confiesa que le acaecía cuando oía las voces y cantos de la Iglesia, que dulcemente resonaban" (Luis de Granada, *Obras completas*, vol. 1: *Libro de la oración y meditación* [Madrid, 1994], p. 415).

("Of the things that help to attain true devotion"), silence and solitude are recommended as the only way to attain "true devotion". This meant that the senses had, in effect, to be "shut down":

> it is necessary to cover the eyes, block the ears and gag the mouth, because through these doors all transactions and all worldly things enter and exit our minds. Thus, the holy man has to be deaf, blind and dumb.[41]

As regards solitude, Luis de Granada cites Saint Bonaventure:

> For the contemplation of divine things, solitude is best, because prayer cannot be properly done where there is a lot of noise and bustle all around.[42]

These citations are characteristic of the attitude toward private contemplation of most of the mystical authors: it should be done in solitude, withdrawn from the distractions of the world, and in silence so that the senses are not distracted by music or images which might beguile the person seeking union with God into other, more sensual or worldly pleasures. At the same time, music was regarded by Luis de Granada and other mystics, including Luis de León in his "Ode to Salinas", as integral to the original divine beauty and as the conduit between body and soul. In his *Introducción del símbolo de la fe* (1583), Luis de Granada uses a musical metaphor to describe the coming together of the different attributes comprising "a perfect and true religion". He compares these to the different voices joining to create heavenly harmony:

> Thus, just as there is corporeal music and melody, resulting from the harmony of different voices joined together as one, so there is also a spiritual music that proceeds from the coming together and correspondence of diverse things with some mystery, this melody so much more beautiful and sweet than the earthly music, just as divine things are so much more beautiful than human things.[43]

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[41] "conviene poner una guarda en los ojos, y otra en los oídos, y otra en la boca: porque por estas puertas entran y salen todas las mercadurías y cosas del mundo dentro de nuestra anima. De manera que el varón devoto ha de ser sordo, y ciego, y mudo" (Luis de Granada, *Libro*, p. 316).

[42] "Para la contemplación de las cosas divinas aprovecha mucho la soledad, porque no se puede hacer bien la oración donde hay mucho ruido y desasosiego de fuera" (Luis de Granada, *Libro*, p. 318).

[43] "Pues así como hay melodía y música corporal, que resulta de la consonancia de diversas voces reducidas a unidad, así también hay la espiritual, que procede de la convenencia y correspondencia de diversas cosas con algún misterio. La cual melodía es

Luis de Granada develops his argument with reference to Augustine, whose musical experience strengthened his faith and his love for the Redeemer and held him in rapture as he glimpsed divine knowledge.[44]

So for Luis de Granada, as for Fray Luis de León, the music of men could, by analogy with the music of heaven, grant knowledge of the divine. The Dominican theologian, however, was essentially pragmatic in his attitude toward music: it could serve a useful function by enhancing devotion among those attending the liturgy. Although it was an unwelcome distraction in private contemplation, he acknowledged it as a metaphorical illustration of divine order in creation and a conduit between the soul and heaven.

This complex of ideas is also developed in the writings of Saint Teresa of Ávila. She, too, recommends solitude and silence as the best companions for contemplation. In the Constitutions for the Reformed Order of Discalced Carmelites, she decrees that even in divine worship, the liturgical texts should never be sung in polyphony but to a monotone (without even the melodic fluctuations of Gregorian chant) and in a subdued, modest manner, lest music should become a distraction to singer or listener.[45] Yet she was quite prepared to countenance polyphonic music as part of the liturgy on special occasions, as when, on 22 February 1580 (which was the first Sunday in Lent), the Holy Sacrament was transferred to the Church of Santa Ana in the newly founded convent at Villanueva de la Jara, south of Cuenca. As the procession wound through the streets thronged with people, the bells were rung, and "inside the church, the Te Deum was sung *in alterna-*

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tanto más excelente y más suave que la corporal, cuanto son más excelentes las cosas divinas que las humanas" (Luis de Granada, *Obras completas*, vol. 10: *Introducción del símbolo de la fe*, II [Madrid, 1996], p. 337).

[44] "Con lo cual se confirmaba más en la fe de este misterio, y se encendía más en el amor de su Redemptor, y se arrebataba y suspendía en la admiración de este consejo divino" (Luis de Granada, *Introducción*, p. 337).

[45] "Jamás sea el canto por punto, sino en tono, las voces iguales" (Teresa of Ávila, *Constituciones*, in *Santa Teresa de Jesús: Obras completas*, ed. Efrén de la Madre de Dios and Otger Steggink, 2nd ed. [Madrid, 1967], p. 631). Cited hereafter as Teresa of Ávila, *Obras completas*. See also the *Visita de las Descalzas*, written by Saint Teresa on the orders of Padre Gracián and first published in Madrid in 1613, in the section headed "Canto coral": "Mirar lo que se dice en el coro, así cantado como rezado, y informarse si va con pausa, y el cantado que sea en vox baja…que se pierde la modestia y espíritu de nuestra manera de vivir. Y si en esto no se pone mucho, serlo ha la demasía y quita la devoción a los que lo oyen" (Teresa of Ávila, *Visita de las Descalzas*, in *Obras completas*, pp. 653–54).

tim, with one verse in polyphony and the other played on the organ."[46] Interestingly, Saint Teresa was accompanied on the mission to found this convent by the visionary nun Madre Ana de San Agustín (?1547–1624). In her *Relacion que hizo de su vida*, Madre Ana confirms that the procession was "muy solemne con muchas çirimias y musica".[47] She goes on to describe how, while she was trying to decide one night after Matins which text in honor of Saint Ann to hang in the church, she heard an angelic choir singing the antiphon and verse "O beata Anna". Her decision was thus made for her; and a few nights later, she had a vision in which the Virgin with Child and Saint Ann appeared to her to express their satisfaction with her choice.[48] Saint Teresa also recounts how this nun heard celestial music during the journey to Villanueva de la Jara, as if confirming their decision to found a convent there; Ana awakened her one night to hear "a melody that seemed to come from heaven…a music in which thanks were given to the holy Mother for the undertaking to found that convent."[49]

In her writings Saint Teresa recounts other occasions when music, earthly and celestial, either triggered a mystical experience or formed part of one. In the *Meditaciones sobre los cantares*, she tells of how a nun in prayer had heard a God-sent voice of such beauty that if the Lord had not caused it to cease singing, the state of rapture produced by the music might well have resulted in her death.[50] Writing

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[46] "Entradas en la iglesia, comenzaron el Te Deum, un verso la capilla de canto de órgano y otro el órgano" (Teresa of Ávila, *Fundaciones*, in *Obras completas*, p. 605).

[47] Elizabeth Teresa Howe, *The Visionary Life of Madre Ana de San Agustín* (Woodbridge, 2004), p. 94.

[48] "despues de acauada la yglesia puniendo los escudos de la capilla mayor estaua con deseo de ponerle alrededor un retulo que fuese en seruiçio de la gloriosa santa Ana y no determinandome qual pondria, una noche despues de maytines estando yo con este pensamiento oy una musica a los angeles que cantaron una antifona y berso desta gloriosa santa por lo qual entendi que era aquel el retulo que N[uest]ro Señor gustaua que estuuiese y asi le puse como le oy a los angeles que dice: 'o beata Anna que semper regans que senper regans cun angeles ylic nostri sic memor eso ut tuo mereamur sociari colegio' y luego el uerso y despues de puesto una noche despues de maytines yo en oraçion se me apareçio el Niño Jesus y su madre y la gloriosa santa Ana" (Howe, *The Visionary Life*, p. 96).

[49] "una melodia que pareçe ir del çielo…que era una musica en que se agradeçia a la santa Madre el camino que haçia por aquella fundaçion" (Howe, *The Visionary Life*, p. 12).

[50] "que sé de una persona que estando en oración semejante, oyó cantar una buena voz y certifica que–a su parecer–si el canto no cesara, que iva a salirse el alma del gran deleite y suavidad que Nuestro Señor le dava a gustar, y ansí proveyó Su Majestad que dejase el canto quien cantara, que la que estava en esta suspension bien se podia

in Salamanca in April 1571 in her *Cuentas de conciencia*, she confesses that she, too, experienced such rapture as the result of hearing a song about how hard it would be to bear life without God:

> All day yesterday I was totally alone, except for when I took communion; I experienced no rapture though it was Easter Day. Last night, when I was with all the others, they sang a song about how hard it would be to bear life without God. As I was already troubled, the rapture was such that my hands became numb and there was nothing I could do to stop it, for these states of rapture occur when I am happy and also when I am greatly troubled, and to this day I cannot understand it.[51]

It is interesting to note that Saint Teresa's rapture is associated with the nature of the text that was set to music, and was thus justified according to Augustinian precepts. She composed her own "cantarcillos", or *villancicos*, which were either intended for specific feast days or to be sung on a particular occasion ("La cruz", for example, was to be sung in Soria on 14 September 1581).[52] Her active involvement in the composition and performance of *villancicos* is mentioned several times in her correspondence, as well as by her early biographers. Even though the nuns were only to sing in a monotone during the celebration of the liturgy, she deemed it perfectly acceptable to sing *villancicos* to alleviate melancholy[53] and approved of music, poetry and even dance for entertainment on certain feast days, especially Christmas and Easter.[54] Contrary to Martín de Azpilcueta's strictures, she felt that

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morir" (Teresa of Ávila, *Meditaciones sobre los Cantares* [7,2] in *Obras completas*, p. 359).

[51] "Todo ayer me hallé con gran soledad, que, si no fue cuando comulgué, no hizo en mí ninguna operación ser día de la Resurrección. Anoche, estando con todas, dijeron un cantarcillo de cómo era recio de sufrir vivir sin Dios. Como estava ya con pena, fue tanta la operación que me hizo, que se me comenzaron a entomecer las manos y no bastó resistencia, sino que como salgo de mí por los arrobamientos de contento, de la mesma manera se suspende el alma con grandísima pena, que queda enajenada, y hasta hoy no lo he entendido" (Teresa of Ávila, *Cuentas de conciencia*, in *Obras completas*, p. 461).

[52] Teresa of Ávila, *Poesías*, 7, in *Obras completas*, p. 503.

[53] "He mirado cómo no me envía algún villancico que a osadas no habrá pocos en la elección, que yo soy amiga de que huelguen en su casa con moderación" (Antonio de Santa María, *Dichos y hechos de Santa Teresa de Jesús* [Madrid, 1983], p. 57).

[54] "Para conservar esta alegría tenía su Reverencia para tales días sus ciertas fiestecitas, tal vez conciertos y bailes, como las Pascuas y Navidad, y tal vez con un certamen poético, como los días de San José, y otros de su mayor devoción, con que descubría el talento de sus hijas y también su obediencia y su devoción" (Santa María, *Dichos y hechos*, p. 77).

on occasion music could be more appropriate than a sermon. One Christmas, according to Antonio de Santa María, she organized "un baile y algunas coplitas" (a dance and some little couplets) that she wrote for the nuns to sing. However, she noted that one nun was missing and sent another to fetch her. The nun was found praying in the choir. Her response was reported to Saint Teresa: "it would be better if our Mother should bring us a preacher to give us a sermon on the mystery of the Christ Child, than ordering us to dance, since a sermon draws in the soul, while dancing distracts the spirit."[55] It would seem the righteous nun had read or heard of something along the lines of Azpilcueta's tract.

Such anecdotes, whether entirely true or not, reveal that, in the first place, music formed part of the mystics' daily lives; and, secondly (and more importantly, perhaps) that it was accepted that music might both trigger mystical rapture and provide a conduit that led to experience of celestial music and intuition of divine truth. While Saint Ignatius Loyola was transported by music beyond human suffering,[56] Saint John of the Cross, during his final illness—as a true mystic should—found solace in celestial rather than earthly music. According to the anecdote recounted in the *Suma de la vida y milagros del venerable Padre Fray Juan de la Cruz* and elsewhere, the holy man turned away the group of musicians who had been brought to his bedside to afford him some alleviation from his physical torments, saying that "it was not right that he should use earthly pleasures to distract him from the suffering he received from God". Not wishing to show ingratitude, however, he then allowed them to play and sing; but he at once "went into rapture with another superior and silent music". When he was asked what he

[55] "mejor fuera que nuestra Madre nos trujera un predicador que nos predicara el misterio del Niño Jesús, que no mandarnos baylar, que recoge el alma y el baylar distrae el espíritu" (Santa María, *Dichos y hechos*, pp. 77–78). A different version of this anecdote is recounted in Francisco de Santa María, *History of the Reform*: "One feast day she decided that the community should come together for a special recreation and sing together. One gloomy individual murmured that it would be better to contemplate. Saint Teresa heard her, and turning to her with a stern expression said, 'Go then, my sister, go and contemplate in your cell, while your sisters rejoice with Our Lord'" (Francisco de Santa María, *History of the Reform*, Book VI, chapter xx; cited in Peers, *Studies of the Spanish Mystics*, pp. 163–69).

[56] "Music seemed to have the effect of transporting him above all earthly suffering; and, when tortured with agonizing inward pains, he was frequently relieved by listening to religious canticles, sung by the brethren" (Bartoli, Book IV, chapter 7; cited in Peers, *Studies of the Spanish Mystics*, p. 22).

thought of the music, he replied: "I did not hear it, for the Lord held my attention with another, better kind of music."[57]

This celestial or "silent" music is precisely that described in verse 4 of Fray Luis's "Ode to Salinas", a music that

> pierces the atmosphere
> to reach the highest sphere,
> and there is heard another kind
> of eternal music,
> the fount and origin of all music.[58]

The heavenly visions of Saint Teresa's secretary, Madre Ana de San Agustín, also equated celestial music with order and harmony, though her descriptions of the choirs of angels clearly owe much to those of the Pseudo-Dionysius:[59]

> As I have said, I was taken up to heaven…I saw that I was taken to a vast city, shining and made of crystal and adorned with many rich things and the most beautiful gardens with many different and beautiful and most sweetly-scented flowers. The streets were paved with precious stones…[with] great harmony and different kinds of music, with an order and concord that can only be described as heavenly.[60]

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[57] "Sucedió un día destos de su enfermedad, que unos seglares devotos, con deseos de aliviar al Santo y entretenerle un rato en sus trabajos, le llevaron unos músicos; pero el Siervo de Dios que tenía puesto su alivio y consuelo en solo padecer por su amor, con traza y discreción pidió que antes que cantasen les diesen un poco de colación, pagándoles la buena voluntad, y hizo que después los despidiesen sin darle música. Preguntándole después por qué no los había querido oír y gozar de aquel rato de alivio, respondió no era bien que él se divirtiese del padecer por Dios, con entretenimientos de la tierra. Porfiaron con su devoción, dejándoles tañer y cantar. Pero al punto que ellos comenzaron con su ejercicio, el santo Varón se quedó suspenso con otra música más superior y callada. Lo cual se vio en que después preguntándole qué le había parecido de la música, respondió: No la oí, porque el Señor me ocupó con otra mejor" (Alonso de la Madre de Dios, *Suma de la vida y milagros del venerable Padre Fray Juan de la Cruz* [Antwerp, 1625], in *Primeras biografías y apologías de San Juan de la Cruz*, ed. Fortunato Antolín [Valladolid, 1991], pp. 69–70). For a more detailed (and slightly different) account, see Crisógono de Jesús, *Vida y obras completas de San Juan de la Cruz* (Madrid, 1964), p. 322.

[58] "Traspasa el aire todo / hasta llegar a la más alta esfera, / y oye alli otro modo / de no perecedera / música, que es la fuente y la primera" (Luis de León, "Oda a Salinas," in *Fray Luis de León, poesías completas*, ed. Cuevas, p. 95).

[59] See Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Celestial Hierarchy*, in *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, trans. Colm Luibheid (London, 1987), pp. 160–75.

[60] "Como [h]e dicho fuy lleuada al çielo…ui que me pusieron en una grandisima çiudad resplandeçiente y cristalina y muy adornada de grandes riqueças y de jardines bellisimos de dibersas y hermosas flores con suauisimo olor. Las calles todas empedradas de piedras preçiosas que las que aca lo son mas en su comparaçion son como

Madre Ana's reference to "order and concord" taps again into Pythagorean discourse, revealing the extent to which such ideas infiltrated and informed the thinking of the mystics and their assumptions about music.

Yet to what extent was 16th-century Spanish music distinguished by this mystical vein of thought? Earlier historians of Spanish music certainly tended to present mysticism in music as a distinguishing feature of the "Spanish school" of composers of the period in response to a more general, late-19th-century historical approach that divided European musical developments in the Renaissance into national schools. The desire to identify "Spanishness" in music tended to look to mysticism in sacred music (along with folklore in the secular tradition) in order to distinguish and even justify certain stylistic features.[61] For example, Felipe Pedrell, the editor of the first *Opera omnia* of Tomás Luis de Victoria, could not help but link, by association of period and origin, that composer with the mystics:

> Like Teresa de Jesús and Juan de la Cruz in mysticism, Victoria and our great masters are musician-poets in their mystical harmonies, and they know how to find in the exaltation of their souls the tone of that unique music which, having found its perfect expression and sublime beauty in the setting of the divine word, remains immutable, like original beauty, inspiring all subsequent beauty.[62]

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de tier[r]a, mucha armonía y diferençias de musicas, con un orden y conçierto al fin como del çielo" (Howe, *The Visionary Life*, p. 81).

[61] On nationalism in Spanish music historiography, see Juan José Carreras, "Hijos de Pedrell: la historiografía musical española y sus orígenes nacionalistas (1780–1980)," *Il saggiatore musicale* 8 (2001): 153–62; Pilar Ramos López, "The Construction of the Myth of Spanish Renaissance Music as a Golden Age," in *Early Music: Context and Ideas (International Conference in Musicology, Kraków)*, ed. Karol Berger, Lubomir Chalupka, and Albert Dunning (Krakow: Jagiellonian University, 2003); Pilar Ramos López, "Mysticism as a Key Concept of Spanish Early Music Historiography," in *Early Music: Context and Ideas (II International Conference in Musicology, Kraków)* (Krakow: Jagiellonian University, 2008); and Emilio Ros-Fábregas, "Cristóbal de Morales: A Problem of Musical Mysticism and National Identity in the Historiography of the Renaissance," in *Cristóbal de Morales: Sources, Influences, Reception*, ed. Owen Rees and Bernadette Nelson, Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Music (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007), pp. 215–34. See especially p. 216, where Ros-Fábregas discusses the roots of the perception of Spanish music from the Renaissance: "I believe that these problems, related mostly to questions of nationalist and religious interests, have created a dysfunctional gap between the vision of Spanish music history from inside Spain and from outside" (Ros-Fábregas, "Cristóbal de Morales," p. 216).

[62] "A la manera de Teresa de Jesús y de Juan de la Cruz en el misticismo, Victoria y nuestros grandes maestros son músicos-poetas en sus concentos místicos, y saben hallar en la exaltación de su alma el acento de aquella música única que, habiendo

Pedrell clearly saw Victoria as participating in Juan de la Cruz's "música callada": "with his soul in sweet delights, he goes into raptures like our great mystic; he hears 'aquella música que se escucha en noches puras' ".[63]

Only two years after Pedrell's edition of Victoria's complete works, one of the earliest monographs dedicated to 16th-century Spanish music, Henri Collet's *Le mysticisme musical espagnol* (Paris, 1913), was published. Collet focused his study on sacred music, since—in his view—secular music was clearly less important in terms of artistic development in Spain in the 16th century; and music, the most expressive of the arts, was in any case the most suited to "mystical effusions".[64] Collet asserted that the composer himself "must have felt the force of this mystical passion" even more than his contemporaries Lassus and Palestrina, since he was removed from a secular, frivolous life. He characterized Victoria's music as "both mystical and Spanish".[65] Again in the context of a discussion of the different characteristics of the national schools, Rafael Mitjana applied similar criteria to the music of one of Victoria's contemporaries, Fernando de las Infantas, whom, he claims:

> must have been endowed with a highly exalted temperament, and this is seen clearly in his ardent mysticism that swept him in the direction of heterodoxy.[66]

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hallado su expresión justa y su sublime belleza en la interpretación de la divina palabra, permanece immutable, como belleza primitiva, inspiradora de todas las bellezas posteriores" (Pedrell, ed., *Thomae Ludovici Victoria Abulensis: Opera omnia*, 7: lvii). This connection had already been made by the German musicologist and biographer of Victoria, Karl Proske (1794–1861). Proske's publication of early sacred music in his *Musica divina sive thesaurus selectissimorum omni cultui divino totius anni*, 4 vols (Regensburg, 1853–62), was an important source for Pedrell.

[63] "presa su alma de suaves deliquios, se exalta como nuestro gran místico; oye 'aquella música que se escucha en las noches puras' " (Pedrell, ed., *Thomae Ludovici Victoria Abulensis*, 7: lvii); "Victoria possède une veine mystique inépuisable. Certains traits caractéristiques de ses oeuvres laissent deviner que cet Espagnol brûlait en un gran feu d'amour mystique, et manifestent clairement que le musicien d'Avila est le compatriote de sante Thérèse" (Proske, *Musique divine*, cited in Collet, *Le mysticisme musical*, p. 475).

[64] Collet, *Le mysticisme musical*, pp. 5–9. See also Ros-Fábregas, "Cristóbal de Morales," pp. 223, 225.

[65] "Victoria est, de ces musiciens, celui qui devait ressentir avec le plus de force cette passion mystique, car il n'avait pas derrière lui, comme les deux autres [Lassus, Palestrina] une vie mondaine et frivole" (Collet, *Le mysticisme musical*, p. 388); "Telle est l'oeuvre de Victoria, diverse et expressive, à la fois mystique et espagnole" (Collet, *Le mysticisme musical*, p. 472).

[66] "Conviene observar que nuestro compatriota debía hallarse dotado de un temperamento en extremo exaltado, y buena prueba de ello encontramos en su ardiente

The identification of mysticism with "Spanishness" was not confined to composers of the 16th-century, whose exalted spirits led them to compose in a supposedly identifiably "mystical" style, which was also portrayed as an intrinsic aspect of the Spanish character. Thus E. Allison Peers, who dedicated much of his life to the study of the Spanish mystics—and who, as the first professor of Spanish in Britain, was enormously influential—wrote in 1924 that "no thoughtful traveller can spend many weeks in Spain without perceiving that mysticism is inborn in its people."[67] This comment purports to be based on empirical observation; but another traveller through Spain in the 1920s, John Brande Trend (1887–1958), found himself at odds with Peers's assessment.[68] Trend first visited Spain just after World War I to write articles on aspects of the culture and life of a country that had not been torn apart by conflict for Middleton Murray's journal *The Athanaeum*.[69] His musical interests were influenced by his experiences with the Marlowe Society at Cambridge and his mentor Edward Dent. Trend's fascination with the Golden Age would later lead to his appointment in 1933 to the first chair of Spanish at Cambridge University. An agnostic who was more interested in secular forms, Trend rejected the Collet-Peers view of 16th-century Spain, as is clear from his correspondence with Dent on completion of his major contribution to Spanish music historiography, *The Music of Spanish History to 1600*, published by the Hispanic Society of America in 1926:

> The two musical books for the Hispanic Society have gone to press. The Ritualists & the Tudor Church Music people will be furious; so will the mystics—if they ever read me, which is doubtful… What I'm trying to get at is that Victoria's style is nothing to do with mysticism, or the Council of Trent, or "Moorish blood", but—Giovanni Nanino

misticismo, que le arrastra hasta la heterodoxia y que se imprime con rasgos indelibles en sus más hermosas creaciones" (Rafael Mitjana, *Don Fernando de las Infantas, teólogo y músico* [Madrid, 1918], p. 71).

[67] E. Allison Peers, *Spanish Mysticism: A Preliminary Survey* (London, 1924), p. 3.

[68] Indeed, Trend's correspondence with his mentor Edward Dent reveals that the two men failed to see eye to eye about Spain and were, to some degree, rivals. On 23 March 1926 Trend wrote to Dent that he would have to leave his residence in Granada, the Carmen de la Cañada, "for the tiresome Prof. Allison Peers (of L'pool) is coming (to this house, too) to run an Easter course of Spanish studies, & will give me no peace" (King's College, Cambridge, Archive, EJD/4/429/2).

[69] See Tess Knighton, "Perspectivas del hispanismo musical británico en el siglo XX: el caso de John Brande Trend (1887–1958)," in Juan José Carreras, ed., *La musicología en la Edad de Plata* (Zaragoza, 2010).

> and Marenzio. The things of his usually sung are the "oochiest" and not really like him: there are other splendid 5 & 6-part madrigalian motets: and then (when he had got to Madrid) things for 2 & 3 choirs, *with organ*, like (I imagine) Benevoli, or that sort of thing.[70]

Trend's emphatic rejection of the link between mysticism and musical style in Victoria's music as developed or assumed by earlier writers is clear; however, his insistence on the influence of Roman composers also only tells a part of the story, since Victoria was musically trained in Spain. Specifically Spanish musical traditions are apparent in a number of his works, especially in those described by Trend as the "oochiest". He is undoubtedly referring here to pieces such as the Tenebrae responsories and motets, for example *O magnum mysterium* and *Vere languores*, which were performed during Holy Week at the recently founded Catholic Cathedral of Westminster and which, as a result, had achieved a certain currency among church choirs in England.[71] These works are generally composed in a more restrained, austere style that is largely homophonic and eschews contrapuntal ingenuity; their comparative simplicity—yet dramatic effect in performance—encouraged the identification of them as different, and that difference as mystical.[72]

Trend continued the debate in his *The Music of Spanish History to 1600* by focusing his attention on the relationship between art and music in 16th-century Spain: "Nothing", he wrote, "could be more unwise than an attempt to draw a parallel between Victoria and El Greco".[73] He argues that they had nothing in common except that they

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[70] J. B. Trend, letter to Dent, London, 19 February, 1924 (King's College, Cambridge, Archive, EJD/4/429/2). In this group of "mystics" Trend was perhaps including both Collet and Peers (or possibly just Peers), since he refers to him, and his circle, in this way on other occasions.

[71] See Knighton, "Perspectivas del hispanismo."

[72] Trend was right in his insistence that these works represented only a relatively small part of Victoria's *oeuvre* and that they should therefore not be taken as typical. While Trend was surely wrong to dismiss the influence of the Council of Trent and its musical reforms altogether, it is also clear from earlier Spanish theologians, such as Martín de Azpilcueta, that Augustine's belief that music could only successfully incite the listener to devotion and the contemplation of heavenly matters if the words were clearly audible was already in circulation. The emphasis on *fabordón* in Spain and the homophonic motet style cultivated by Spanish composers of around 1500, such as Juan de Anchieta or Francisco de Peñalosa (whose sacred works were unknown to Trend), may indeed reflect a pre-Tridentine concern with this same belief.

[73] John Brande Trend, *The Music of Spanish History to 1600*, Hispanic Notes & Monographs (New York, 1926; reprinted New York, 1974), p. 154.

were contemporaries and had spent some time in Italy, and that both had been studied by French historians:

> It is remarkable that in the case of both Victoria and El Greco, the French biographers have regarded their subject from much the same standpoint. They see them through a glass darkly; for M. Barrès it was "Le secret de Tolède", while for M. Collet it was "Le Mysticisme musical espagnol."[74]

As in his letter to Dent, Trend wished to divert the discussion away from what he deemed to be Romantic and vague notions of mystical inspiration to a more concrete musical analysis of Victoria's works, more in tune with the then-burgeoning scientific discipline of musicology spearheaded by, among others, his mentor. He preferred the term "realism" to describe Victoria's works, in that his settings reflected the nature (both structure and meaning) of the text in question in the manner of the Italian madrigalists:

> The "realism" (sometimes called mysticism) of his music owes much to the discoveries of the madrigalists… The fervor and expressiveness of his work is mainly a question of technique.[75]

Despite Trend's best attempts at a corrective approach to one which assumed that sacred music by 16th-century Spanish composers had to be inextricably linked with mysticism, the notion has proved remarkably durable: probably, as he predicted, his book was not read by the "mystic" faction. For example, the most recent history of Spanish music, published in 1983, includes a section with the heading "Victoria, místico" and the reiteration of the idea that his music reflects (and, indeed, was inspired by) the 16th-century mystics. The author, Samuel Rubio, suggests that Victoria was a mystic on the basis of his desire to return to Spain to contemplate the divine mysteries, and that the fervor which is the hallmark, in his view, of Victoria's setting of the *Officium Hebdomadae Sanctae* (again, his music for Holy Week) stemmed in part from a musical idiom that exuded "spiritual and religious order".[76]

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[74] Trend, *The Music of Spanish History*, p. 156. Trend refers to *Greco, ou le secret de Tolède* by Maurice Barrès (1862–1923).

[75] Trend, *The Music of Spanish History*, pp. 159–60. It is not by chance that Trend insisted on the influence of the madrigalists upon a composer who is not known to have composed any secular works; see Knighton, "Perspectivas del hispanismo."

[76] "orden espiritual y religioso" (Samuel Rubio, *Historia de la música española*, vol. 2: *Desde el Ars Nova hasta 1600* [Madrid, 1983], p. 214). See also Ros-Fábregas, "Cristóbal de Morales," pp. 226–29 for further citations of more recent histories by American and German music historians.

Rubio's approach is clearly steeped in the "Spanishness"-equals-"mystical" historiographical tradition:

> In order to penetrate, understand and really explain this unique and extraordinary phenomenon, it has to be borne in mind that Victoria is Spanish, and, like Saint Teresa, from the inexorable, austere land around Ávila; that, in addition, his nature was quintessentially that of a priest; and that, furthermore, also like Saint Teresa, he was a mystic.[77]

The historiographical tradition of seeing Spanish sacred music of the 16th century "through a glass darkly" has tended to muddy the waters as regards the relationship between music and mysticism. Neither the musical discourses underlying Fray Luis's "Ode to Salinas", nor the simpler homophonic style cultivated by Spanish composers in settings of specific liturgical texts, was unique to Spain; though both were, perhaps, developed more fully there. Trend's attempt to divorce musical development from its broader cultural context by suggesting that Victoria's style could be explained purely by the influence of the Italian madrigalists is perhaps an understandable reaction to the nationalistically inspired notion of Victoria as mystic. Yet the writings of 16th-century musicians, as well as of the mystics themselves, suggest a much more complex picture, permeated by the concepts of (and attitudes to) music developed by the Pythagorean and Augustinian traditions widely disseminated in Renaissance Spain. Indeed, Fray Luis's poem can be seen as an apotheosis of these ideas on music, contemplation and celestial harmony.

[77] "Para penetrar, comprender y ahondar hasta las raíces en este fenómeno único y singular hay que tener en cuenta que Victoria es español, y, como Santa Teresa, de la recia y austera tierra abulense; que, sobre todo esto, estaba revestido del carácter sacerdotal; y que, por añadidura, también como Santa Teresa, fue un místico" (Rubio, *Historia de la música*, p. 215).

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CHAPTER SUMMARIES

PART ONE: LARGER TRENDS

Religious Autobiography
Fernando Durán López

One of the most frequent manifestations of Catholic spiritual literature in Spain, beginning in the 16th century, is feminine conventual autobiography written from obedience. Starting with the model consecrated by the *Life* of Saint Teresa, and finding its period of maximum impact in the early to mid-17th-century, a genre of writing is constructed which had a long trajectory in Hispanic spirituality, with some very definite characteristics, conceived for use on the inside of the religious orders and—to a lesser extent—as a testimony for society as a whole. Mystical effusion and ascetic mortification, the sacrament of penance, the pressures of the Inquisition, the necessity to nurture a modern hagiography and the proselytizing of the reformed religious orders are the principal formative elements of this Catholic autobiography in Golden Age Spain. This chapter centers around describing and analysing all these characteristics, as well as deviations from the basic model which have been highlighted by feminist criticism. It touches upon the external history of the genre and its quantification; the typology of authors; the relationship between female authors and their confessors; the goals of the text (moral example, control of orthodoxy, proselytizing, hagiographical documentation), as well as its narrative structure and mystical content.

Traditions, Life Experiences and Orientations in Portuguese Mysticism (1515–1630)
José Adriano de Freitas Carvalho

Remembering some lines of influence which, in authors and in works—be they literary writings or reformed religious institutions—converged in spiritual currents at the end of the Middle Ages in Portugal (which must be situated within the larger picture of the Iberian Peninsula), we propose to examine, through representative examples, their continuities and renovations throughout the 16th century. We must remember, however, that this long period witnessed fractures, frontiers and attempts at unity, manifested in the face of repressive institutions as well as through solemn definitions and conciliar orientations. Consequently, we will try to show how, in such a controlled context, men and women—lay and religious, noble and peasant—were reviving continuities (readings of ancient texts and assumptions of medieval ways of life such as pilgrimage and hermitism) and living renovations (reformed and new religious orders, themes and methods of prayer, meditation and devotions). Some authors from this period dedicated their works, many of

which enjoyed wide diffusion throughout Europe, to the defense and illustration of the *ars orandi*. We judge these works to be significant for the consolidation of the multiform Catholic reform movement in the Iberian Peninsula. Finally, we shall allude to the artistic popularization of some of these new forms of devotion.

New World Colonial Franciscan Mystical Practice
Francisco Morales

The Franciscan Order had a significant influence on late medieval mystical practice. The "Itinerarium mentis ad Deum" of Saint Bonaventure had shaped generations of Franciscans, many of whom came to the New World in the 16th century. The native communities of Mesoamerica, for their part, practiced a religion enriched with experiences quite similar to those of medieval mysticism. The great contribution of the Franciscans to New World mystical practice was their notable effort to express the medieval European mystical tradition, enriched with humanistic and Renaissance thought, within a cultural context completely different from that of western Christianity. The Franciscans of New Spain wrote, published and promoted books written in the Nahuatl (Aztec) language containing exercises and concepts which stem from Franciscan mysticism. Study of these provides an excellent opportunity to analyse new forms of expression of western mysticism within a non-western culture.

The Alumbrados: Dejamiento *and its Practitioners*
Alastair Hamilton

The term *alumbrado* (or "enlightened") has always been vague and was rejected by those to whom it was applied. Yet the edict of 1525 condemning the movement also referred to the *dejados*, those who practiced "abandonment". This group of mystics, who were quite ready to accept the name, are the subject of this article. Mainly active in the area of Guadalajara, with numerous contacts with local Franciscan convents and the households of the higher nobility, the *dejados*, most of whom were of *converso* origin, disseminated their teaching from the beginning of the second decade of the 16th century until the time of their arrests between 1524 and the late 1530s. Their doctrine presents a hybrid appearance symptomatic of the spiritual restlessness that characterized Spain (and much of Europe) at the time. Criticisms of the sacraments and ceremonies of the Church were combined with an insistence on the prerogatives of those inspired by the Holy Spirit, an evangelical emphasis on the Bible, and a mystical practice which had its origins among Franciscans but was soon regarded as heterodox. The *dejados* are discussed here in the broader context of contemporary Spanish spirituality, Spanish reactions to Lutheranism, and widespread suspicion of the *conversos.* The article ends with a survey of recent interpretations of the phenomenon.

PART TWO: SPECIFIC FIGURES

Mother Juana de la Cruz: Marian Visions and Female Preaching
Jessica A. Boon

Juana de la Cruz (1484–1532) was the abbess of a Spanish Clarisan convent, which was also the locus for her 13 years of public preaching. In this essay, attention to the interplay between Jesus and Mary in Juana's private experiences (as narrated in contemporary hagiographies) enables an analysis of the authority that the figures of Christ and the Virgin lend to Juana in her sermons—which were in fact public visionary presentations. In order to assess the Mariological authority upon which Juana relies, it is necessary to consider first the problems and possibilities around visionary claims in the Spanish church at the turn of the 16th century. The openness of Spanish authorities to visionary experience on the one hand, when combined with the intensity of Marian devotion common in late medieval Iberia on the other, allowed Juana to live a vocation filled with extraordinary experiences in relation to Marian icons and visions without seeming entirely unorthodox. These two strands form an essential context around the authoritative / interpretative claims Juana makes in relation to both Mariology and Christology during her Holy Week sermons. The manner in which Christ and Mary are inseparable in Juana's authorizing strategy is revealed by a close study of Juana's sermons from Palm Sunday through Good Friday, as it is during these visions that Juana draws on the contemporary Iberian tradition of the twin Passions of the Mother and the Son in order to make her case forcefully for her own right to preach.

John of the Cross, the Difficult Icon
Jane Ackerman

Saint John of the Cross and his writings have been taken to stand for many things. However, what he sought to signify often differed from the meanings assigned to him. It appears that he wanted his writing and personal impact to have a temporary effect on his contemplative Carmelite readers. He encouraged perceptual change in a variety of ways, but change itself was a matter of relationship with God. The discursive worlds that he created in his doctrinal writing and lyrics could not directly represent transformative relation with God, he thought. Neither could his works catalyze divine encounter. Instead, his writing performed the tasks of the spiritual guide, encouraging and orienting the reader, but deferring to divine initiative. He insisted that the true teacher of his contemplative reader was God in the operation of the Holy Spirit.

Teresa of Jesus and Islam: The Simile of the Seven Concentric Castles of the Soul
Luce López-Baralt

Saint Teresa's symbol of the seven concentric castles of the soul has posed a persistent, apparently unsolvable problem for Hispanists: no European antecedent could be found for her mysterious simile. She describes the interior journey of the soul in the form of seven concentric castles made of fine crystal or diamond. In the last resplendent castle is God, with whom the soul unites, leaving behind the demon who wants to penetrate the castles which mark the progressive dwellings of the mystical path. Miguel Asín Palacios broke the critical impasse when he discovered the same symbol in the *Nawādir*, an Islamic spiritual treatise. But the problem of the Islamic affiliation of Teresa's concentric castles was not completely resolved by this critic, because the documentary evidence he possessed was that of a text from the end of the 16th century—contemporary or posterior, therefore, to the Saint of Ávila. The present study documents several other Islamic treatises which ellaborate the same mystical symbol of the concentric castles: Abū-l-Ḥasan al-Nūrī's *Maqāmāt al-qulūb*, Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī's *Gawr al-umūr* and Muḥammad b. Mūsa al-Damīrī's *Kitāb ḥayāt al-ḥayawān*, among other Sufi works. Since these mystical treatises range from the 9th to the 15th centuries, we can finally affirm that Saint Teresa's most famous spiritual symbol is of Islamic origin.

The Mysticism of Saint Ignatius Loyola
Darcy Donahue

Ignatius Loyola is best known as the founder of the Jesuits, and this is certainly one of his most important achievements. Equally important for the history of early modern spirituality are Loyola's writings, which document his evolution from a young Basque soldier and aristocrat to ascetic, mystic and religious reformer. The present study will provide an overview of this evolution by exploring his writings, with particular emphasis on his *Autobiography* and *Spiritual Exercises* as well as some of his correspondence. More specifically, it will explore the ways in which Loyola's rhetoric of self reflects his particular form of disciplined spirituality and religious practice. This essay will also examine his writings from the perspectives of orthodoxy and heterodoxy as they were perceived in his day. Finally, it will relate his works, including those of a mystical nature, to the origins and ideology of the religious order which he founded and its ultimate validation by church authorities.

Cecilia del Nacimiento, Second-Generation Mystic of the Carmelite Reform
Evelyn Toft

Cecilia del Nacimiento's life and work demonstrate that the legacy of Santa Teresa de Jesús and San Juan de la Cruz thrived among the second generation of Discalced Carmelite women. Better educated than most women of her day, Cecilia described mystical experience more clearly and comprehensively

than most of the male theologians of her time. Although some of her texts were lost due to the opposition of the male Discalced Carmelite leadership, Cecilia left behind an impressive body of work in poetry and prose. Her prose treatises rival those of San Juan de la Cruz in their detailed elaboration of deep contemplative experience. In the *Tratado de la transformación del alma en Dios,* Cecilia demonstrates command of her subject matter: the contemplative path of spiritual development from its beginnings to the fullness of spiritual marriage. Like Santa Teresa, she prepared accounts of her spiritual experiences out of obedience to male religious superiors. This essay gives an overview of Cecilia's work. It outlines the main features of her mysticism as seen in her poetry and prose. It also describes how the legacy of Santa Teresa and San Juan are reflected in her life and mystical texts.

The Influences of Saint Catherine of Siena and Saint Teresa of Ávila on the Colombian Nun Jerónima Nava y Saavedra (1669–1727)
Clara E. Herrera

In 1994, the autobiography of Mother Jerónima Nava y Saavedra (1669–1727), a Colombian nun, was published under the title of *Autobiografía de una monja venerable*. Previously, however, the account was believed to have been written by her confessor, Father Juan de Olmos y Zapiaín, because of his introduction to the work, which her editor calls "Elogio a la autora." The resultant confusion in authorship has meant that Mother Nava has not received appropriate literary scrutiny. This chapter will turn to her writing to initiate an analysis of structural moments by which the life of Catherine of Siena (1347–1380) informed the autobiographical narration of Jerónima Nava, as well as of the discursive techniques which Teresa of Ávila (1515–1582) inspired in her. Focusing on the Colombian nun's incorporation of these rhetorical / thematic situations and strategies into the narration of her own spiritual life, as well as using these elements in defense of the gender-sensitive issues of writing and theological teaching, it will also consider how her "imitation" of Catherine of Siena and of Teresa of Avila was adapted to prevailing religious and cultural structures within Nueva Granada.

A New Way of Living? Luisa de Carvajal and the Limits of Mysticism
Glyn Redworth

This chapter will explore why we need to consider Luisa de Carvajal as a mystic. It suggests that this is partly because of the hegemonic position held by Teresa of Ávila and the perceived need to assimilate all female religious figures to her model. By taking Luisa's life and her work as a whole, this essay will argue that she was more influenced by the Jesuits than by the Teresian reforms, with the further suggestion that her so-called mystical writings form a very small part of her literary output. They largely stem from an early period in her life, before she was allowed to engage in an active female apostolate. Luisa's own reluctance in being labelled as a visionary will be used to support the idea that, for the term "mystic" to have real meaning, an individual

must consciously perform as a mystic. Furthermore, the suggestion will be made that her most intense spiritual writings are self-referential rather than didactic.

From Saint to Sinner: Sixteenth-Century Perceptions of "La Monja de Lisboa"
Freddy Domínguez

Maria de la Visitación, "la Monja de Lisboa," was a celebrity across Catholic Europe at the end of the 16th century. Her deep piety, her ecstasies, and the physical manifestations of her communions with God were admired by commoners, clerics, and nobles alike. Some, however, doubted the veracity of her mystical experiences, and her criticisms of the political establishment raised eyebrows among members of the political elite. Ultimately, her fall from glory at the hands of the Inquisition was as hard as her rise was ethereal. This essay aims to describe her ascent within its political and cultural context, and to explore the polemic she elicited before and after her disgrace. By investigating contemporary notions of what separated a saint from a sinner, a spiritual guide from a seditious fraud, we shall better understand the forces pulling on the fabric of early modern mysticism.

PART THREE: INTERDISCIPLINARY APPLICATIONS

The Gardens of Teresa of Ávila
Maryrica Ortiz Lottman

This article will explore Teresa of Ávila's interaction with the real plants and gardens of her own environment and with her development of the horticultural symbols inherited from both the Christian and Islamic traditions. Her autobiographical *Libro de la vida* (completed 1565) was undoubtedly influenced by the gardens of Augustine's 4th-century *Confessions*. In her *Camino de la perfección* (1564–67) and *Castillo interior* (1577), Teresa further refined the vegetal metaphors that had originated in her *Vida*. According to legend, the Carmelite Order itself was founded by the Old Testament prophet Elijah in the garden-like landscape on the biblical Mount Carmel. Teresa's writings explore a number of garden types drawn from gardens of exegetical literature and Christian iconography, including the garden of the soul, the Garden of Gethsemane, the *hortus conclusus* of the Virgin Mary, the spiritual font of grace (*fons vitae*), and the medieval cloister garden as an earthly paradise. Finally, the presence of the Islamic garden within the culture of Ávila will be noted, as will the parallels between Theresian mysticism and medieval Sufism.

Home, Sweet Home: Teresa de Jesús, Mudéjar *Architecture, and the Place of Mysticism in Early Modern Spain*
María Mercedes Carrión

This essay offers a visual comparison of the pages of one of the least-commented works by Teresa de Jesús, the *Libro de las fundaciones*, with the physical spaces of the Carmelite convents she reformed. The goal is to understand better the *convivencia* (or cohabitation) of Christian and Islamic mystical signs (such as the desert, the inner rooms, the fountains, or the silk fabrics) in the Carmelite nun's own texts. The proposed method of reading is to collate the pages of the *Fundaciones* and the spaces of the convents there represented, thus bringing together in visuality the rich mystical space that De Jesús composed. The result will be a toolbox of interpretation to aid further readings of this literary author and spiritual and conventual reformer in her own mystical archive.

Interrupted Mysticism in Cervantes's Persiles
Christina H. Lee

This essay discusss how Miguel de Cervantes refashions mysticism in his novel *The Trials of Persiles and Sigismunda* within the context of the secular and material world of early modern Spain. In the episode of Feliciana de la Voz, Cervantes questions the value of the mystical experience by first leading readers to believe that they will witness a supernatural event and then defying their expectations, interrupting the supposed mystical moment right before its climax. In broad terms, Cervantes casts Feliciana's episode as a perspectivistic exploration of mysticism itself. More specifically, he legitimizes the yearning for supernatural divine intervention by highlighting the protagonist's mother-quest, while clearly making the point that the resolutions to her earthly problems are to be found exclusively in the realm of the empirical world.

Suspensio Animi, *or the Interweaving of Mysticism and Artistic Creation*
Elena del Río Parra

The aim of this chapter is to establish the basic parameters under which *suspensio animi*—defined as detachment of oneself—serves as creative pinnacle in mystical literature. In particular instances, deliberately or involuntarily, conscience can suspend judgment of all kind in order to neither affirm nor deny. The result of this process results in distinctive poetic manifestations of mystical character in the Hispanic Renaissance. This phenomenon is not only traceable up to the later Baroque, but also serves as foundation for the historical *Avant-garde* as well as 20th-century Existentialism. Our chapter will determine how the detachment from the "self" takes particular literary forms in early modern Hispanic mystical poetry and other representative texts.

"Through a Glass Darkly": Music and Mysticism in Golden Age Spain
Tess Knighton

Recent studies of the historiography of Spanish Renaissance music have raised important issues about the relationship between music and mysticism as a way of identifying supposedly "Spanish" stylistic features in the works of 16th-century composers such as Cristóbal de Morales, Francisco Guerrero and Tomás Luis de Victoria. Writers on music, both Spanish and non-Spanish, from the later 19th century onwards have tended to associate the more homophonic, austere style of some of their music with the mystical qualities of their age, partly in an attempt to promote the idea of a non-exotic, noble and pure culture associated with Castile. Even in more recent histories of music, Victoria, in particular, has been associated with the mystics because of a shared birthplace (Ávila) with Saint Teresa. This association between music and mysticism as a cultural construct of around 1900—serving mainly nationalistic and political ends—is both undeniable and crucial to our understanding of the historiography of Spanish music. This essay attempts to bring into focus attitudes towards music expressed in a variety of forms, including the writings of the mystics, and to explore in particular the role that music might or might not have had, in their view, as a conduit between earthly devotion or contemplation and an intuitive grasp of the divine.

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